

Rev. 03/9/94 (white)
Rev. 03/14/94 (blue)

THE HUNTED
(1995)
(KIRINA)

Written by

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REVISED FINAL DRAFT

Kirina Productions
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FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight shines through the sliding glass window of a shadowy hotel room. A door opens to a brightly lit hallway and we hear the laughter of what sounds like three happily chatting and slightly drunk Japanese businessmen.

THE FIRST enters with a large attaché, face concealed in the shadows. He lays a key on the dresser. Visible on its plastic tag, below red kanji, is the room number: 920.

THE NEXT TWO "BUSINESSMEN" enter with attachés and close the door. They do not turn on a light. They gradually fall silent as the charade ends. They are here for a different kind of business.

Attachés open and glimmers of sharp steel swords flash in the moonlight. Western-style suits are discarded for loose fitting black uniforms. The swords are strapped on and other weapons are slipped inside hidden jacket pockets.

The first figure separates from the rest and opens the sliding glass door to the balcony. He steps outside.

2 EXT. BALCONY / HOTEL / TOKYO - NIGHT 2

Standing in the moonlight KINJO's face is revealed for the first time. He looks as if he was carved from steel. His eyes are ice. He is a handsome man. Handsome as Satan.

He pulls on a black mask.

CRANE PAST TOKYO SKYLINE TO STREET: A cab stops in front of a hotel. PAUL RACINE, an athletic businessman, steps out with his partners, CHASE PATERSON and JOHN MARTIN.

JOHN

It's like selling ice to the Eskimos. I can't believe we pulled it off.

CHASE

They need those co-processors. If they knew how to make them, they wouldn't be buying ours.

JOHN

Next year they will know how.

PAUL

By next year I'll have designed something better.

3 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

They enter the busy hotel lobby.

JOHN

So guys, I've got the number of a hot young apprentice geisha. What do you say I have her call a couple friends, and we'll have a little celebration party...

PAUL

No thanks. I'm going up to my room and double check the interfacing code. They kept asking about...

JOHN

Paul, it's a done deal. Stop worrying. You're a millionaire. Time to stop and smell the roses. Let me set you up with a girl...

CHASE

Let it go, John.

JOHN

Okay, your loss. See you in the morning. Late morning.

John heads off. Chase looks over at his friend.

CHASE

There are other things to do. I lived here for awhile, I could show you around. There's a Taiko concert in the hotel gardens tonight. Drums.. chanting. In the city Kabuki theatre, folk dancing, Bunraku...

PAUL

You go Bunraku. I just want a quick drink at the bar.

CHASE

You know, in a way John's right. It's been five years.. it might be time to let go.

PAUL

Maybe. But not tonight.

Chase nods. Paul pats him on the shoulder and heads for the bar.

4 INT. HOTEL COCKTAIL LOUNGE / "THE WHISKEY BAR" - NIGHT

KIRINA, a hauntingly beautiful woman in a red western-style cocktail dress, sips hot sake alone at the bar. She is drunk, yet holds herself up with great dignity and style.

Paul enters and sits at the other end of the bar.

PAUL
Scotch and soda.

A Bartender half bows and pours the drink. Paul surveys the room. It is decorated in a stylized Country Western motif. He spots Kirina's lovely figure, her face turned away.

The Bartender sets the drink down and Paul takes a sip. He admires Kirina's shape, draped in the backless dress. Her form is so perfect, so sexily attired, Paul has to resist the impulse to reach out to see if she is real.

He forces such thoughts out of his mind and looks away.

As his eyes wander he glances into the mirror and sees the reflection of Kirina's face looking directly at him. She has been watching him look her over. An amused half-smile drifts across her lips.

Paul, embarrassed, smiles back at her apologetically. She laughs silently and, as she does, her eyes glow with a burning warmth. Paul's smile freezes as he senses the heat in her eyes.

5 INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Paul sits next to Kirina, pouring sake for her. Up close she is even more beautiful. Uncomfortably so.

KIRINA
Computer chips?

PAUL
Yes.. I guess it doesn't sound very interesting. Does it?

KIRINA
You like computer chips?

PAUL
I make a lot of money at it.

KIRINA
Better to like something.

PAUL
What do you do?

KIRINA
(finishing her cup)
I drink sake.

5 CONTINUED:

PAUL
Should you drink any more?

KIRINA
No

She holds up her empty cup with a gentle laugh and Paul pours her some more. She sips it slowly.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

PAUL

It's still early. We could go out for dinner or see some Kabuki or... there's a Teako concert in the gardens.

KIRINA

(laughing)
Teako? What is teako?

PAUL

Drums?

KIRINA

Taiko.

6 EXT. HOTEL GARDENS - NIGHT

6

Kirina pulls Paul through a large crowd toward the music.

Taiko drummers, bare chested, with bright red bands tied across their foreheads, pound exotic rhythms on huge drums with wooden sticks. The sounds, the drummers themselves, belong to another time. Suddenly, modern Tokyo disappears into an ancient world, colorful, primitive, passionate.

Kirina's eyes delight in the spectacle. Paul has never met anyone so amazingly alive, and so frustratingly mysterious. She holds her bare shoulders for warmth in the night air. Paul removes his jacket and drapes it over her shoulders.

Kirina tilts her head and kisses him softly, their lips barely touching. Her hand strokes his face gently.

KIRINA

You have a good heart.

She turns to watch the concert, her fingers slipping into his hand. Paul stares at her lovely face, enthralled. The drummers continue, like the pounding of a heartbeat.

7 INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

7

Paul watches as Kirina, feeling the effects of the alcohol, fumbles with the key to her room. She turns to Paul.

KIRINA

I can't open. Please help me.

She hands the key to Paul. Its red number reads: 921.

Paul opens the door. He stands aside as Kirina stumbles through. She takes his hand and pulls him in.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

KIRINA

Inside.

8 INT. HOTEL SUITE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

8

It is the best suite in the hotel, Japanese styled with shoji screens and tatami mats. They both remove their shoes and Kirina turns on some soft lights.

PAUL

This is a lovely room. How long are you staying?

KIRINA

Tonight only.

Paul looks for a place to set the key down.

PAUL

Are you visiting Tokyo for business, or...

KIRINA

Not visiting.

PAUL

Then why-

KIRINA

Don't talk.

She takes Paul's hand and pulls him close, kissing him. Paul still has the key in his other hand. He slips it into his jacket pocket and wraps his arms around her.

Across the room eyes watch them from outside the window.

9 EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

9

Kinjo, mask covering his face, watches from the balcony. Dressed completely in black, he is like a living shadow.

On the next balcony wait, SUJIN and MISATO. Sujin silently leaps cat-like across the span and crawls over the railing. He looks in and glances at Kinjo questioningly. Kinjo shakes his head and whispers. (IN SUBTITLED JAPANESE.)

KINJO

We'll wait until he leaves.

10 INT. HOT TUB ROOM / MONTAGE - NIGHT

10

The suite's bathroom boasts a large wood bath.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

Paul watches as Kirina takes off her dress and lets it fall to the floor. She removes her panties and silk stockings. She turns toward Paul, her body as sleek and lean as a panther's. She says something in Japanese as she unbuttons his shirt.

PAUL

What? I don't understand
Japanese.

She laughs and kisses him.

11 DISSOLVE TO: MOMENTS LATER

11

Paul and Kirina make love in the bath. Steam rises from the water and beads on their naked skin like sweat.

Kirina holds Paul tightly, sadly, desperately. She has never been afraid of death, but she has always loved life.

They make love slowly, gently, intensely, both knowing that this is a moment that will never be recaptured.

12 DISSOLVE TO: LATER

12

Paul lies in the tub watching Kirina dry her hair with a towel. She is so lovely, she seems like a dream to him. She wraps the towel around her body. Tears roll reluctantly from her eyes.

PAUL

You're crying.

She wipes the tears and touches the bath water with her fingertips. Sending ripples across its surface.

KIRINA

"The goddess cried. And where each tear struck the sea, an island grew." Sometimes I think the women of Japan have been crying ever since.

A somber smile comes to her face.

KIRINA

You must leave now.

PAUL

Perhaps we could...

KIRINA

Not possible.

Paul can feel the dream ending.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

PAUL

You have a husband?

KIRINA

A husband? No. There's a man who... owns me. But I want to be free. Tonight I am free. You were part of that. Thank you.

PAUL

I don't understand.

KIRINA

Understand that you must go now.

She picks up a towel and holds it out to him.

PAUL

I don't even know your name.

KIRINA

Kirina.

13 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

13

Kirina wraps herself in a red and silver kimono that adds to the air of mystery that surrounds her like a mist. Paul finishes dressing. Kirina gives him a last kiss.

KIRINA

Good-bye. Live long.

Paul goes to the door and looks back at her, hesitating. Should he stay, ask more questions? No. He exits.

Kirina crosses the room. She glances out the balcony window. She can't see them, but she knows they are there. Turning away, she slides open the bedroom door and enters.

14 EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

14

Kinjo nods to Sujin and Misato. They draw their swords.

15 INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

15

Paul enters the elevator, and presses the third floor.

The doors close. He suddenly feels his jacket pocket. He forgot to leave her key.

16 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

16

The room is lit only by candles.

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED:

16

Kirina kneels on the tatami mat, meditating. Kinjo slips into the room, followed by Sujin. Misato waits in the doorway, watching the front door. Kinjo pauses before Kirina, who is so still she looks like a statue.

Her eyes open and she looks at him evenly, without fear.
(THEY SPEAK IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.)

KINJO

You know why I am here.

KIRINA

Yes.

Kinjo is surprised by her coolness. He draws his sword and the polished steel blade gleams white hot. Curled around the square black guard is a gold drawing of a dragon.

KINJO

I was told to do it as
painlessly as possible.

KIRINA

I don't ask kindness from
assassins hiding behind masks.

Kinjo is stunned by her courage and her unearthly beauty. He slowly removes his mask. His face is doubtful. As if he wishes permission for what he knows he must do.

17

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

17

Paul impatiently hits the ninth floor button but the elevator has to go down before it can go up. The doors open to the third floor and then close. It starts up.

18

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

18

Sujin and Misato are stunned that Kinjo has revealed his face. Misato steps into the room, as if to protect his master from what must be a witch. Kirina studies him.

KIRINA

You are not Japanese.

KINJO

I was born in Kyoto. My mother
was of Chinese descent.

KIRINA

They send an ainoko (mixed blood)
to murder an ainoko. So Nemura's
thugs refused to dirty their hands
with my impure blood?

19 INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Paul raises his hand to knock on the door, but hesitates. Instead, he quietly unlocks the door and slips inside.

20 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

20

Paul silently sets the keys down on a lamp table. He hears the voices in the bedroom.

KINJO (O.S.)

No one but you has seen my face.
I am known by reputation. You
could buy all of Nemura's men
for what they pay me for a
single night.

Curious, Paul tiptoes toward the doorway. He sees the black figures standing before Kirina.

21 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

21

Kirina eyes Kinjo defiantly.

KINJO

... I was sent because he wanted the best. My skill is unmatched.

KIRINA

It takes great skill to butcher an unarmed woman.

KINJO

Enough! You can die painlessly or slowly. Choose!

KIRINA

I wish to die slowly and with much pain so I will remember what it was to be alive.

Kinjo stares at her unraveled. He bows.

KINJO

You have great courage. But I have orders that it be quick. I am sorry.

He raises his sword.

KIRINA

Be sorry for yourself. I am free. You are a coward and a slave.

22 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul, on the phone, watches the scene through the living room door. Sweat beads on his forehead as he whispers.

PAUL
- send the police. Immediately...

He sees Kinjo raise up his sword to strike Kirina. Paul drops the phone and rushes into the room.

PAUL
NO!!

23 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

23

Kinjo sees Paul and yells to Misato and Sujin in Japanese.

KINJO
Kill him!

They spin and throw hira shuriken (star-shaped darts). The sharp points rip into Paul's hands, face and chest with splatters of blood. Paul freezes in pain.

Kirina's face comes alive in terror.

KIRINA
No! Don't touch him!

Kinjo whirls, and with a fierce cut of his sword, decapitates her.

Paul's mouth opens in a silent scream as he watches Kirina's body collapse to the floor.

Sujin's sword slices Paul's throat and Misato's rips open his midsection. Paul crumples to the floor. Sujin spots the phone dangling in the living room.

SUJIN
The phone. He called the police.

KINJO
Go, quickly.

Sujin and Misato step over Paul's body and exit. Kinjo pulls his mask back on. He takes a deep breath and tries to calm his soul. The room is covered with blood. Everything is as it should be. He exits.

24 EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

24

The blue lights of a Tokyo police car and ambulance flash across the hotel entrance.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

Another police car arrives and LIEUTENANT HAKATA, a homicide officer, quickly steps out. He is met by an OFFICER.

OFFICER

Two victims. Male and female. It appears the woman was the target. She was decapitated by a sword.

HAKATA

And the man?

OFFICER

Paul Racine, visiting businessman. He's still alive, but will die soon. They cut him to pieces.

A stretcher rushes from the hotel. Hakata glances at the unconscious Paul as he is wheeled to the ambulance. The officer hands Hakata a plastic bag containing a shuriken.

OFFICER

We found these in him. The points dipped in poison. Shurikens. The kind ninjas use.

HAKATA

Or people pretending to be ninjas. Send one to the hospital. Find out what kind of poison. And check Racine in under an alias. If he lives they may come back to finish the job.

The stretcher is loaded and the ambulance doors slam shut.

25 INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

25

Under bright lights on an operating table, MASKED SURGEONS stare down at Paul. In the background, machines monitor his weak heart rate and pump blood into his body. A TECHNICIAN enters the room with a bagged shuriken.

TECHNICIAN

They can't trace the poison.

SURGEON 2

We must operate now. Without an anesthetic if necessary.

SURGEON I

Call Doctor Yamura. Perhaps he can control the pain long enough for us to sew him together.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

We FOCUS ON Paul's face.

SURGEON 2 (O.S.)
Burry. He's dying.

26 DREAM MONTAGE

26

Kirina stands naked, bathed in a red light. Paul reaches out to her. Something pulls him back.

Kirina's face is tranquil. She shakes her head and speaks to him in Japanese.

Paul tries to fight the force pulling him, but he can't. Kirina disappears into the distance.

27 INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

27

The SOUND of Paul's heartbeat grows stronger on the E.K.G. The surgeons stitch Paul's midsection together.

DOCTOR YAMURA, an older man with wise eyes, inserts and gently twists tiny acupuncture needles into the skin behind Paul's neck. Paul's eyes are barely open; he is dazed and confused, but feels no pain.

SURGEON 1
I think he will live.

As Dr. Yamura works, he studies the shuriken on a nearby table. It's clear he recognizes its unusual shape.

28 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

28

Paul lies in a hospital bed, bandages wrapped around his neck and chest. He is extremely weak, but alive. Standing by his bedside is Dr. Yamura and Lieutenant Hakata.

DR. YAMURA
Are you well enough to talk to
the police?

PAUL
(in a rough whisper)
Yes.

DR. YAMURA
Be brief. He needs rest.

Hakata nods and pulls out a notebook.

HAKATA
How many of them were there?

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

PAUL

Three.

HAKATA

Were they dressed as ninja?
Black uniforms with masks?

PAUL

Yes.. except the leader. He had
taken off his mask.

Hakata and Dr. Yamura are both startled.

HAKATA

Did you see his face?

PAUL

Briefly. Before they killed her..

Hakata is taken aback by this development. He has to go back over his notes to come up with the next question.

HAKATA

The girl.. did.. had you ever seen
her before the lounge?

PAUL

No. Never. Who was she? Why
did they kill her?

Paul looks at Hakata with desperation in his eyes.

HAKATA

We don't know much except her
name. It might be connected
with the yakuza, Japanese Mafia.
They're frequently behind these
kinds of theatrical executions.

Paul stares into space, destroyed.

PAUL

She knew they were going to kill
her. They waited for me to
leave. If I hadn't left..

DR. YAMURA

That's enough questions for now.
He must rest.

TWO ARMED POLICE OFFICERS stand watch on either side of Paul's door as Dr. Yamura and Hakata talk in the hallway.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

DR. YAMURA

He saw the leader's face. You know what that means...

HAKATA

Yes, they might come after him...

DR. YAMURA

They will come after him. He saw the face of a ninja. They will hunt him across the world to kill him. It's their religion.

HARATA

Ancient history, doctor. What we have here are yakuza thugs in black costumes toting swords.

DR. YAMURA

That type of shuriken is only used by the Makato cult. Surely you've heard of the Makato?

HAKATA

I've heard fairy tales about superhuman assassins. But I'm not scouring the country side for secret ninja villages everytime the yakuza bumps someone off.

DR. YAMURA

Whether you believe it or not, Racine is in great danger. They will come for him.

HAKATA

I've taken steps to see that he is protected.

Hakata gestures toward the two officers at the door.

DR. YAMURA

They cannot protect him from ninja. The Makato will kill him and your guards. You must...

HAKATA

Dr. Yamura. I will see to it that Mr. Racine is kept safe. Meanwhile, I have to apprehend the men responsible. Real men, not ancient legends.

30 EXT. FARMING VILLAGE - DAY

A rustic farming village is tucked away in a green valley in rural Japan. A long black Nissan President drives up a winding road to a small temple on the hill.

31 EXT. TEMPLE - DAY

31

The wooden temple is over five hundred years old, and looks every day of it. The Nissan parks next to a small rental car. A well dressed old man, MR. MOTOGI, steps out of it.

Nearby two AMERICAN TOURISTS fail to communicate with a humbly bowing priest speaking Japanese.

MALE TOURIST

How old is it? HOW.. OLD?

FEMALE TOURIST

He's not deaf, John, he doesn't speak English.

He isn't deaf. It's Kinjo, dressed in old robes and so deferring and sweet we can hardly believe it's him.

Mr. Motogi enters the temple, tosses a coin into a collection box and claps two times. He prays for a second and then joins them.

MR. MOTOGI

May I be of assistance?

FEMALE TOURIST

Is this the Kasuga shrine?

MR. MOTOGI

Oh, no, this is a temple, not a shrine. Kasuga is far down the highway. You must be lost.

MALE TOURIST

Oh.. well is this temple famous or anything?

MR. MOTOGI

I'm afraid not. It's just the village temple. The priest tends to the locals. All farmers, simple country people.

They look at the old temple and Kinjo disappointed.

FEMALE TOURIST

Give him some money, John.

(CONTINUED)

31

CONTINUED:

31

John reaches into his pocket reluctantly, walks over to the coin box and tosses it in. He then returns to Kinjo and smiles. Kinjo bows deeply, ignoring the unintended faux pas. Mr. Motogi leads them back to the rental car and points them in the right direction.

Kinjo goes to work pruning in the small adjoining gardens. As soon as the tourists leave, Mr. Motogi approaches.
(THEY SPEAK IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.)

KINJO

Spring is coming strong. I have
to keep clipping back sprouts.

MR. MOTOGI

Boss Nemura wants to talk with
you personally.

KINJO

Who is he? Why would I?

MR. MOTOGI

He was the man who hired us to
kill the girl in the hotel.

KINJO

There's nothing to talk about.
She's dead. I prefer to forget
the rest.

MR. MOTOGI

Nemura is very powerful. He's
responsible for a great deal of
our business. You've always
trusted me before...

32

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

32

Motogi stands by his sedan on a dirt road in a secluded forest. A black Mercedes pulls up. NEMURA, a handsome Japanese gangster in an Italian suit, steps out of it with three thugs. He starts a cigarette with a gold lighter.

NEMURA

When is he going to get here?

MR. MOTOGI

He's right behind you.

Nemura spins and standing before him is Kinjo in black, eyes gleaming from under his mask.

KINJO (O.S.)

What do you want from me?

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

NEMURA

Is it really the infamous Kinjo?
Sometimes even I thought you
were only a legend. You killed
Kirina? Personally...

KINJO

Yes. You asked for it.

Nemura drags on his cigarette, emotions churning inside him. He isn't sure why he insisted on this meeting. It's just that somehow it doesn't seem finished.

NEMURA

Was it painless? I ordered that
it be painless.

KINJO

It is never painless. But it
was quick. One stroke.

NEMURA

Did the she beg for her life?

Kinjo eyes Nemura with disgust. How can he hope such a thing from a woman who faced her death with such nobility?

KINJO

No. She was calm. Her eyes
fearless even as I cut her.

NEMURA

The ainoko said nothing before
she died? Nothing about me?

KINJO

(calmly lying)
She laid a curse on you and your
descendants. A death curse.

This disturbs Nemura. Kinjo conceals his satisfaction.

NEMURA

A curse of a whore. Why didn't
you kill the man?

KINJO

What man?

NEMURA

The foreigner her body was found
with. Why did you let him live?

KINJO

Live? No. He is dead.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

NEMURA

Don't you read newspapers? He's alive.

Now it is Kinjo's turn to be disturbed. Nemura senses it and smiles, enjoying the turnabout.

NEMURA

So the Lord of the Makato is not infallible after all.

Nemura pulls a large bundle of money from his jacket.

NEMURA

It's not important. I don't care what happens to the whoremonger. Kirina's been punished. That's all that matters. Here's double your price.

Kinjo doesn't take it.

KINJO

No. Leave. Leave now.

Nemura tries to force the money into Kinjo's hand, but he won't take it. Nemura tosses it to the ground.

NEMURA

It's your fee. You earned it.

KINJO

Pick up your money and leave while you are alive.

NEMURA

Who the hell do you think you're ordering around, ninja? You pick it up!

Nemura draws a pistol from his jacket and aims it at Kinjo, and his thugs all do the same. Kinjo is amused. Suddenly an arrow pierces the ground between Nemura's shoes.

Nemura and his thugs frantically glance around, at the bushes, up in the trees. There is nothing but darkness.

MR. MOTOGI

Put your guns away before you are killed. There are ninjas in every tree in this forest.

Nemura reluctantly holsters his gun. His thugs follow the example. Mr. Motogi walks over and picks up the money. He gently places it in Nemura's hand with a bow.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

MR. MOTOGI

Lord Kinjo is so honored by your presence that he refuses to accept money for his services.

Nemura glances at Kinjo and his eyes float to the trees all around them. He abruptly gets in his car with his thugs and drives off. Mr. Motogi goes to Kinjo.

MR. MOTOGI

It will be difficult for me to smooth this over. Boss Nemura...

Kinjo grabs Mr. Motogi by the throat.

KINJO

Alive? The foreigner's alive?
Why didn't you tell me?!

Kinjo throws him off.

MR. MOTOGI

I didn't think it mattered. We weren't paid for him. He can't tell the police anything that...

KINJO

He saw my face!

MR. MOTOGI

Your... how could he?

KINJO

I made a mistake... that woman...
Kirina... she...

MR. MOTOGI

Still, he can't identify...

KINJO

It's more than that! He saw my face. He holds part of my soul. I've felt troubled since that night, now I know why. He must die.

Mr. Motogi slowly nods. He understands.

MR. MOTOGI

Yes, put your soul to rest. But do it quick and clean. This Kirina has caused us all enough trouble already.

33 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

33

Paul lies in bed with pillows propped behind him. He is still weak, but a little better. Chase enters.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

CHASE

Hey there. How are you doing?

PAUL

I'm alive. They inform me that that's a major accomplishment.

CHASE

They said we could only talk for a few minutes. And you can't go home for at least a couple of weeks. When I said you should experience Japan, this wasn't what I had in mind..

Chase's smile softens as his eyes become serious again.

CHASE

The girl?

PAUL

I don't want to talk about it.

CHASE

I'm sorry. After Claire it...

PAUL

Look, it has nothing to do with Claire. It's sad but... I barely knew her. Where's John?

CHASE

He went back with the contracts, we figured...

PAUL

Good. Get on the next plane and follow him. Close that deal.

CHASE

Paul, you're half dead. You don't know anyone here. You don't speak Japanese. And you're the only witness to a murder. I'm not leaving you alone.

PAUL

I'll be alright. I'm a big boy. I can take care of myself. We've worked too hard for this. Go.

Paul sits up, but winces with pain from moving too fast.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

CHASE

John can handle it. You just rest
and stop worrying..

PAUL

I'm alright, really..

A nurse enters and calls Chase in Japanese. He replies.

CHASE

She's dragging me out. We'll
argue tomorrow. Call me if you
need something. I'll be in my
hotel room.

PAUL

Tomorrow I'll make you go.

Chase waves him off and exits. Paul sinks back into the bed, exhausted by the conversation.

34 INT. KENDO DOJO - DAY

34

Dr. Yamura enters a modest Tokyo storefront Kendo school. Students dressed in steel helmets and leather armor are working out on the wood floors with bamboo swords.

Dr. Yamura notices a pretty young woman, MIEKO, standing off to the side watching. (THEY SPEAK IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.)

DR. YAMURA

Excuse me, I am looking for Sir Takeda. I was told that he was visiting Tokyo as a guest of this school.

MIEKO

That is him, in the center.

She points to an armored figure in the center of a circle of six students. Suddenly, all six attack in unison.

In an amazing display of skill, the figure simultaneously dodges, parries and attacks the six, striking each with such force that they stagger back in awe.

The center figure bows and the students bow deeply in response. When they are finished Mieko calls out to him.

MIEKO

Sensei?

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

*
34

The figure swaggers over and removes his helmet. TAKEDA is a tall handsome man with the air of an aristocrat and the grace of a world class athlete. Dr. Yamura bows.

DR. YAMURA

I am sorry to trouble you. I am
Dr. Otozo Yamura.

Takeda bows as does Mieko.

TAKEDA

How may I help you?

DR. YAMURA

I don't know where else to turn.
One of my patients was attacked
with these.

Yamura pulls out a drawing of the Makato shuriken. From Takeda's face we can tell he knows exactly what it is.

TAKEDA

When was his body found?

DR. YAMURA

He is still alive.

Takeda's eyes glimmer with intense interest.

TAKEDA

Please continue...

35 EXT. NINJA TRAINING CAMP - DAY

35

NINJA men, women and even children train in a hidden forest complex. RYUMA, a muscular trainer rings a large iron bell. Throughout the camp the ninja stop and gather.

35A EXT. FARMING VILLAGE - DAY

35A*

The bell echoes through the farming village.

*

35B EXT. NINJA TRAINING CAMP - DAY

35B*

Kinjo appears and strides to the center. AKARA, a beautiful woman dressed in simple folk clothing, follows after him, carrying a long wooden box.

KINJO

Sujin! Misato!

Sujin and Misato run to him and bow low. Kinjo opens the wooden box Akara is holding. Inside are three gleaming swords. Kinjo draws his. Akara carries the box to Sujin and Misato. Each obediently draws a sword and looks up questioningly. Kinjo addresses the two in a firm voice that reaches all ears.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

KINJO

I have called you forward so
that you can fulfill your plan.

SUJIN

Plan, Lord?

KINJO

Was it not your plan to have my
soul stolen from me so that you
could usurp my power?

They both stare at him, confused.

KINJO

Why else would you fail to kill
a man who had seen my face? A
man that I ordered to die?

MISATO

Lord.. it isn't possible.. we cut
his throat. He was poisoned..

KINJO

He is alive. Since you are too
well trained to make such a
mistake, you must have planned
to betray me. Now is your
opportunity! The foreigner has
stolen a piece of my soul. Just
kill what remains.

Kinjo walks toward them, his sword rising into position.
The two stand frozen in fear.

KINJO

Test me. See if I have lost my
powers. TEST ME!

They drop to their knees and lay their swords on the
ground. They bow their heads to receive whatever
punishment he chooses to mete out.

BOTH

Master, we failed you, but are
forever loyal!

KINJO

YOU BETRAYED ME!

Kinjo raises his sword as if to behead Misato, but instead
stabs it into Misato's midsection. He kicks Misato over.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

KINJO

You will not die quickly! I
will bury you up to your necks
and leave you to rot in the sun.

Misato lies in agony. Sujin looks up. There is the faint
glimmer of resistance, a will to live. Kinjo smiles.

KINJO

Sujin, take your sword. You would
have been my successor. Now you
have only one chance to live.

Sujin hesitantly picks up his sword and stands. Kinjo
raises his sword high and calls out to the other ninja.

KINJO

I now decree that if Sujin kills
me in combat he shall be my
rightful heir and your lord!

Kinjo holds his hand out to Sujin and beckons him closer.

KINJO

Test me.

Sujin rushes Kinjo and the two swords crash together.

Sujin fights desperately for his life, and to escape a
slow, painful death. But as the swords flash through the
air we see instantly that Kinjo is merely toying with him.

Quick flashes of Kinjo's sword leave thin lines of blood
across Sujin's skin. Sujin falls back to escape the
stings. Kinjo pauses like a cobra preparing to strike.

Sujin silently vows not to die in disgrace. He attacks
with a loud warrior cry. But as Sujin slightly over-
extends his attack, Kinjo's sword whips Sujin's blade to
the left, and the butt of its handle smashes onto his
wrist. Sujin's sword tumbles from his hands into the dirt.

Kinjo raises the point of his sword toward Sujin's face.

KINJO

Come, Sujin, prove you are a ninja.

Kinjo tosses his sword to Sujin. Sujin instinctively
catches it. Kinjo gestures for Sujin to come closer.

KINJO

Test me.

Sujin grits his teeth and rushes Kinjo. A loud cry comes
from his lips as he tries to cut Kinjo down.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

Kinjo sidesteps and punches Sujin in the ribs. Sujin groans in pain but lashes out with another sword stroke. Kinjo leaps over the blade and kicks Sujin's face.

As Sujin's sword helplessly slices through the air, Kinjo drives blow after blow into him. It is almost as if Sujin were unarmed and Kinjo was wielding some terrible weapon. Kinjo's bare fists beat Sujin down to his knees.

Sujin falls to the ground, weakly clutching the sword. Kinjo kicks it from him. He kicks Sujin in the face and spits on him. Sujin lies broken and defeated.

KINJO

You are no ninja.

Kinjo turns and walks away. As he passes Ryuma he says:

KINJO

Make them suffer.

36 INT. BATH HOUSE - DAY

36

Kinjo sits naked on a small stool as Akara gingerly washes the blood from his body with a bucket of water. His eyes smolder with anger and anguish.

KINJO

Kirina. A whore with the face of a goddess and the spirit of a tiger. I've killed a hundred men and women and never once felt shame. But I can't believe that the gods wanted such a woman to die. They are angry with me.

AKARA

The gods are not angry with you, my lord. You are haunted by a memory, a ghost. When a woodsman cuts down a tree he must allow time for its spirit to escape. As this woman died her spirit clung to the man. Cut him down and it will depart.

KINJO

Yes. He must die... if only so there is no witness to my crime. I will kill him myself.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

AKARA

Please, send another. The spell
of this woman has poisoned you.
The man has stolen a piece of
your soul. Send another. Do
not tempt the gods.

Kinjo caresses Akara's face. Her soft voice calms him.

KINJO

You are wise, Akara. I will
send my best men. They will
bring me his head. Then I will
know that the job is done.

37 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM / DREAM - NIGHT

37

Paul sleeps peacefully in his bed. A soft breeze blows the curtains of an open window. Paul opens his eyes slowly. Red light glows from outside.

Kirina is sitting on the bed next to him. Her eyes burn with passion. She moves closer and kisses him.

Kinjo appears over the two. His sword rises up and flashes in the moonlight. The blade hurls down upon them.

38 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

38

Paul is having a nightmare. His forehead is covered with sweat. Mieko sits on the bed, watching him. Dr. Yamura and Takeda stand to the side. Paul calls out and opens his eyes. Dazed, he sees a woman sitting next to him.

PAUL

Kirina?

Mieko gently strokes his forehead.

MIEKO

No.

DR. YAMURA

Mr. Racine, I have brought you
two guests. This is Sir Takeda
and Mieko.

Takeda bows. Mieko stands and bows. Paul nods weakly.

TAKEDA

Mr. Racine, I fear that you are
in considerable danger.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

PAUL

Danger? From what?

DR. YAMURA

The men who attacked you.

TAKEDA

What can you remember about the sword that decapitated the woman?

Paul rubs his head.

PAUL

I've been trying to forget. It was some kind of samurai sword.

TAKEDA

A samurai sword is long and curved with a round guard. Were these shorter, straight and with black square guards?

PAUL

Yes. That's right. They all were carrying the same kind...

The images flash through Paul's mind. The blades that stabbed him. Kinjo raising his high above his head.

PAUL

... except the leader's seemed longer. And on the guard was gold writing. Or a drawing...

TAKEDA

Of a dragon. I was right. It was Kinjo. His sword has been passed down for hundreds of years. It is the living symbol of their cult.

DR. YAMURA

Sir Takeda is a master of Kenjutsu, the descendant of great samurai.

PAUL

Wait a second. Ninjas? Samurai? I'm lost.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

TAKEDA

In western terms: The ninjas are the bad guys. The samurai are the good guys. No one outside of the Makato has ever seen Kinjo's face and lived. Nothing can stop him and his ninja from finding and killing you.

PAUL

If they're so amazing, how come they screwed up and left me alive?

TAKEDA

Saru mo ki kara ochiru.

MIEKO

"Even monkeys fall out of trees." It means that even the best make mistakes.

TAKEDA

But don't count on them falling again. We must get you out of here immediately.

They look at Paul for a reaction. He stares, dumbfounded.

PAUL

Are you crazy? I'm in a hospital. I can barely move. I'm not going anywhere.

TAKEDA

Mieko can tend to your wounds. She is a gifted healer. We will have to slip you past the officers outside.

PAUL

I'm supposed to believe I'm safer with you than in a hospital room guarded by armed police?

TAKEDA

I will take you to a safe place. An island off the coast of...

Paul looks at them wearily.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

PAUL

I don't know you. Either of you.
And I don't believe you. I'll
take my chances with the police.

DR. YAMURA

Please reconsider..

PAUL

No. Just leave me alone. I
can't think any more.

Takeda takes Mieko aside and they speak in a low whisper.
Mieko looks at Paul uneasily. Takeda returns to Yamura.

TAKEDA

He has made his decision. I
will help him only if he wishes.

(to Paul)

Good-bye. May the gods protect
you. Mieko... sister... let's go.

Takeda walks out of the room. Mieko moves to Dr. Yamura.

MIEKO

Let me speak to him alone for a
moment.

Dr. Yamura gives up and leaves the room. Mieko sits next
to Paul and her soft black eyes gaze into his.

MIEKO

My brother is very abrupt. But
he only wanted to help you...

PAUL

I'm sorry. But I can't go with
you. Even if I wanted to...

MIEKO

Don't think of it now. I can
tell that you are in great pain.
Here, this is costus...

She pulls a small leather pouch from her purse and hands it
to him. He opens it. Inside are pieces of a strange root.

MIEKO

Chew on one piece of this at a
time. It will give you strength
and help you heal quickly.

She puts a piece in his mouth. He chews on it. Mieko
takes a pen from the nightstand and writes a phone number.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

MIEKO

We will stay in Tokyo for two days. If you need our help you can call us at this number.

39 EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

39

Takeda and Dr. Yamura wait by the door as Mieko steps out. They walk down the hall, out of the earshot of the guards.

MIEKO

I gave him our phone number.
Hopefully he will call.

TAKEDA

If he lives long enough.

40 INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

40

Chase is reading a book when someone knocks on his door.

FEMALE VOICE

Maid service please. May I turn down your bed?

Chase goes to the door and opens it. Akara, almost unrecognizable in a maid outfit and girlish voice, enters.

CHASE

You're early tonight.

She giggles and turns down the bed. But as Chase passes by, she pulls a small wire from her bosom and strangles him from behind. Two men in business suits, DAMAKO and FUMIO, quickly enter and lock the door behind them. Damako draws a tanto (short sword) from his jacket and raises the point to Chase's face.

Akara releases the wire from Chase's neck and uses it to tie his hands behind his back. Fumio then shoves him into a chair. He pulls a long scarf through Chase's mouth as a gag and holds the ends tightly from behind.

AKARA

We need to find your business partner. He is in a hospital under a false name. We must know which one. And what room.

Fumio slackens the scarf slightly so Chase can speak.

CHASE

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

AKARA

We're sure that you do. Please tell us.

CHASE

NO!

Fumio pulls the scarf tight and with a quick flip Damako slices off Chase's ear. Chase's screams are muffled through the gag. Akara casually searches the room.

AKARA

You must tell us. Or it will be much worse.

Fumio waits for Chase to stop screaming and then he slightly loosens the gag.

CHASE

- they flew him out this morning... to New York...

AKARA

We need the truth please.

Akara notices a pad of paper by the phone. Under the word Paul, the name of a hospital and room number are written. Akara smiles. She holds it up triumphant and Damako nods.

CHASE

That isn't it. I'll tell you...

DAMAKO

(in Japanese)

You are brave. I salute you.

With a quick stroke Damako finishes him.

41 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

41

Paul uses a remote to turn off a cartoon on the television. He lies in bed for a moment, brooding and restless.

He slides the covers from his legs and rises up tentatively. He places his feet on the floor and slowly stands. It is quite a strain. He staggers over to the window and leans on the windowsill for support.

Outside, dark clouds begin to obscure the full moon. Paul senses something ominous far away. Something dangerous.

Paul remembers that he is still chewing on the root. He pulls the mangled piece from his mouth and looks at it with disgust. He tosses it into a trashcan. He sits on the bed and dials a number on the phone.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

PAUL

I'd like to speak to Mr.
Paterson. Room 456.

SWITCHBOARD (O.S.)

Room 456? Oh... there... there's
been an accident... the police are
here. You should talk to them.

PAUL

Accident? What happened to Mr.
Paterson? You must tell me... I'm
his friend.

SWITCHBOARD (O.S.)

He's... dead. Murdered... they...

The phone falls out of Paul's weak hand.

PAUL

Oh god...

42 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

42

A squad car pulls to a stop in front of the hospital.

43 INT. RECEPTION AREA - NIGHT

43

The hospital is quiet. A NURSE in the reception area reads
a magazine. Doctor Yamura sits at a desk checking files.

Lieutenant Hakata hurries past.

DR. YAMURA

Lieutenant? It's very late.
What brings you...

HAKATA

I must see Mr. Racine
immediately. It can't wait...
police business...

44 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

44

Paul, visibly shaken, slides open one of the drawers in the
nightstand. His clothes are neatly folded within.

45 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

45

Lieutenant Hakata walks toward Paul's room. Two janitors
dressed in overalls follow behind, pushing a trashcan on
wheels. One is Fumio, the other NOKARI. As Hakata
continues on they stop at a storage room and enter.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

Hakata checks in with the officers standing guard on Paul.

46 INT. STOREROOM

46

Inside the storage room Fumio and Nokari pull off their overalls. Underneath are black ninja uniforms. They put on masks and draw their weapons from the trashcan.

47 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

47

Hakata comes into the room and finds Paul standing, fully dressed, pulling on his overcoat.

HAKATA

Mr. Racine, what are you doing
out of bed?

PAUL

I'm getting the hell out of
here. That's what I'm doing.
Chase is dead, isn't he?

HAKATA

Mr. Paterson... yes. I regret he
was killed a few hours ago. I
came to tell you. I take
responsibility. I should have
placed him under guard also.

PAUL

Yes, well... we're both learning.
Good-bye.

Paul hobbles toward the door, but almost falls. Hakata catches him and helps him to the bed.

HAKATA

You see? You're in no position
to go anywhere. Trust me, you
are safest here. We have taken
every precaution.

Hakata steps over to the window and glances outside. He pulls a small walkie-talkie out of his trenchcoat.

HAKATA

Station Two, please report.

He looks outside at the building across the street. We can faintly see a PLAINCLOTHES DETECTIVE standing in the window on one of the upper floors of the building.

48 INT. STAKE-OUT ROOM

48

From over the Detective's shoulder we can see Hakata in Paul's hospital window. He replies on his walkie-talkie.

DETECTIVE

All quiet. No signs of activity.

49 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

44

Hakata turns to Paul.

HAKATA

The stake-out across the street will make sure no one can slip in from outside. In the hallway there are two more officers. A back-up is parked outside. You are safer in this room than you could be anywhere else.

PAUL

Dr. Yamura said there's this, unstoppable ninja cult... the Makato? He says...

HAKATA

Dr. Yamura is repeating rumors and superstitions. There are no ninja cults in modern Japan.

50 INT. STAKE-OUT ROOM

50

The door to the room shatters open from a flying kick. Damako lands inside. The two stake-out Detectives spin but in lightning-fast motion, Damako clubs them both with a straight wooden cane, knocking one to the ground.

The standing one grabs one end of the cane, but it comes off in his hand, revealing a razor sharp spear tip. Damako stabs it into his heart. He collapses to the ground, dead.

The remaining detective staggers up and draws his gun, but before he can aim, a long chain flies out of the other end of the multi-weaponed cane. The chain wraps around the detective's hand and Damako pulls him off balance.

Damako kicks the detective in the kidneys. As the Detective buckles, Damako uses the cane to choke and then break his neck. The detective falls dead, and without a moment's hesitation Damako strides to the window. He draws a yumi (short bow) from a sack on his back.

51 INT. STOREROOM

51

Fumio and Nokari watch from the window of the storeroom. They see Damako signal from the window across the street. Nokari moves to a large power circuit box mounted on the wall. He attaches a small handmade bomb to it. He lights the fuse. Both ninja run to the door and exit.

52 INT. STAKE-OUT ROOM

52

Damako draws his bow and takes aim.

53 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

53

Hakata and Paul are still talking.

PAUL

What about Kinjo, the man I saw
kill Kirina?

HAKATA

Kinjo? Yamura told you that?
Kinjo is a myth, a boogie man.
The crime syndicates encourage
these stories to frighten people.
In any case, no swordsman can get
past a police officer carrying a
modern gun...

Hakata draws his 9mm pistol and shows it to Paul. Suddenly, there is a crash of glass. Hakata stops talking. He stands frozen for a moment, his eyes ice over.

He falls to the ground, dead. An arrow sticks out from the back of his head. Blood trickles to the floor.

Another arrow crashes through the window and flies inches past Paul's head. It sticks deeply into the opposite wall. Paul dives to the ground for cover.

54 INT. STOREROOM

54

The bomb on the circuit board explodes. There is a flash of electricity and the room goes dark.

55 INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE

55

Dr. Yamura sees the lights flicker out. He quickly stands.

DR. YAMURA

Oh, God, they're here. Hide
under the desk. Quickly!

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

Dr. Yamura rushes to the Nurse and pushes her under the desk. He then runs into the hall toward Paul's room.

56 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

56

TWO DETECTIVES wait in a squad car. They hear an explosion and see the hospital go black. They run for the building.

57 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

57

The officers guarding Paul's room stand warily in the dark, hands on their gun holsters.

Doctor Yamura enters one end of the shadowy hallway.

DR. YAMURA

Quick! We must...

There is a flash of black behind him and a sword blade pierces his chest. Dr. Yamura tries to scream, but can't. The blade is withdrawn and he falls to the ground, dead. Floating in the darkness are the gleaming eyes of a ninja.

The Officers draw their guns.

OFFICER

Who's there?

58 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

58

Paul crawls along the floor and finds Hakata's pistol.

He reaches onto the dresser and gropes for the bag of medicine and the phone number left by Mieko. He crawls over to the window and slowly stands out of its sightline.

He grabs a chair, and with one hand hurls it through the already cracked window pane.

59 INT. STAKE OUT ROOM

59

Damako sees the chair smash through the glass and fall to the street below. He readies an arrow. But no one comes out the window. He squints at the room, but it is too dark to see inside.

60 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

60

Shuriken darts fly out of the darkness and hit one of the Officers. He screams in pain. The other Officer fires blindly down the hallway in the direction they came from.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

The blade of a sickle flashes up from behind him. It slices the pistol arm of the Officer firing. He screams, and the sickle catches around his neck, cutting his throat.

The remaining officer, bloody from the shurikens, turns and sees Noraki standing with sickle in hand. He tries to raise his gun up to fire. But from behind, Fumio appears, and with a single stroke, cuts the officer down.

The ninja hear more police coming down the hallway. With a silent understanding, Noraki slips into the darkness to ambush them. Fumio turns to Paul's door and kicks it.

61 INT. PAUL'S ROOM

61

The door crashes open and Fumio leaps in, sword ready.

He looks at Paul's bed. It's empty. The body of Hakata lies bleeding on the floor. He sees the smashed window and takes a step toward it. Perhaps his victim fled out it.

A pistol barrel appears from behind the door aimed at the back of Fumio's head. Fumio realizes he's been tricked.

PAUL (O.S.)

Drop the sword.

Fumio smiles to himself. Anyone stupid enough to hesitate, will not be quick enough to kill him. Fumio slowly lowers the sword, as if to comply.

Suddenly, Fumio drops and spins, sword whipping up to strike. The gun fires three times, blasting Fumio away.

Paul holds the pistol with steeled determination. He has finally turned the tables. Hunted has become hunter.

But as Paul limps toward the door, we see another picture: A badly injured man who has had one lucky break, a man unlikely to live out the night. Gun ready, Paul nears the door and cautiously peers into the hallway.

62 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

62

The two detectives run down the hall toward Paul's room. Out of a dark alcove, Noraki springs and throws a flash bomb in the detectives faces, blinding both.

The chain of a kusarifundo appears and wraps around one detective's neck. Noraki quickly snaps his neck.

At the other end of the hall, Paul silently limps out of his room and escapes in the other direction.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

Noraki shoves the dead body at the remaining detective. The detective dodges and pulls his gun. Still struggling to see, the detective fires wildly ahead.

But by now Noraki has slipped behind him. He slices him apart with his deadly sickle.

63 INT. DOORWAY

63

Paul reaches a door with red Japanese lettering and the English words "FIRE ESCAPE ONLY." He slips through.

64 INT. STAIR TUNNEL

64

Paul steps into a large stair tunnel that serves as the hospital's fire escape. With one hand he leans heavily on the stair rail. His other clutches Hakata's gun.

As he limps down the stairs, we see the pain in his face. His wounds are opening up. A faint stain of blood soaks into the bandages around his neck.

65 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

65

Noraki comes into Paul's room with his sickle ready. He sees the two bodies and the shattered window. Confused, he goes to the windowsill and looks across the street.

66 INT. STAKE-OUT ROOM

66

Damako sees Noraki at the window. Noraki gestures "where is he?" Damako furiously smashes his fist down on the windowsill. He waves angrily. "Find him!"

Noraki disappears back into the hospital.

Damako hurls his bow and arrows across the room. He grabs the body of the detective he strangled and strips off his overcoat. Damako pulls it on. He takes off his mask.

67 EXT. HOSPITAL ALLEY - NIGHT

67

Paul staggers out of the fire escape door into a dark alley. He rests against the cold brick walls. He reaches under his overcoat and feels his wound. As he pulls out his hand it is stained with blood. Drops of blood fall to the ground like the rain from the sky.

He has to keep moving. He pulls himself from the wall and limps down the alley toward the neon-lit streets of Tokyo.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

Above him dark rain clouds start to swirl. A couple of scattered drops of rain fall onto the asphalt, as if joining the blood out of sympathy.

68 EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

68

Damako, his Ninja uniform concealed by the long overcoat, walks across the street toward the hospital. There are sirens in the distance. More police are coming.

Rain is sprinkling. Damako avoids the front of the hospital and heads toward the rear alley.

69 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

69

Damako enters the alley. Noraki steps out of the fire exit. (THEY SPEAK IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.)

NORAKI

Have you found him?

Damako grabs Noraki and smashes him against the wall.

DAMAKO

Idiot! He's gone. Where's Fumio?

NORAKI

Dead. Shot in the head.

DAMAKO

Then the police have him!

NORAKI

No! We killed them all.

DAMAKO

Then how could he escape?

NORAKI

Perhaps he is a ghost...

Damako throws Noraki to the ground.

DAMAKO

Silence!

As Damako glares down at Noraki, he sees tiny drops of blood leading out of the alley. They are mingling with rainwater and disappearing. In a second they vanish.

NORAKI

What is it?

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

DAMAKO

Nothing. Go back to Kinjo.
 Tell him you failed. I will
 find the man alone. Do it!

Noraki stands, and runs out of the alley, into the rain and darkness. Damako starts in the opposite direction, toward the city lights and the fast disappearing trail of blood.

70 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - NIGHT

70

Neon reflects eerily upon the water-soaked streets. Paul staggers through the rain, getting weaker and weaker. He stashes the gun in his coat pocket. Paul's clothes are soaked. Drops of blood drip from his pant legs and dissolve onto the wet sidewalk.

71 EXT. TOKYO STREETS - NIGHT

71

Damako tracks down the street. All traces of the blood have washed away in the growing rain. But Damako is an experienced manhunter. He can sense the trail, once pointed in the right direction. He will find Paul.

72 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

72

Paul pauses, too weak to go on. He leans on a stairwell railing leading down to the bright lights of an underground pachinko parlor. It looks warm and crowded. Summoning up all his strength, he shuffles down toward the door.

73 INT. PACHINKO PARLOR - NIGHT

73

The pachinko parlor is a huge room with a mirrored ceiling and a vast maze of pachinko machines. There is a steady din of clattering steel balls and tinny electric bells.

A surprising variety of OLD WOMEN and MIDDLE-AGED BUSINESSMEN sit in rows concentrating on the machines.

Paul is generally ignored as he staggers in dripping wet. He glances back at the door, uncertain. Is it possible they'll find him here?

He makes his way deep into the maze of machines, far away from the front door. He stops in a corner and wearily leans against the wall to rest. A pool of pink rainwater forms under him. He senses someone staring at him.

A SMALL JAPANESE GIRL, about nine or ten, peers through a glass prize counter dreaming of goodies. She notices the wounded man with a mixture of curiosity and fear.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

Paul looks at her; dizzy from the loss of blood. Somehow, even in this crowded room, the small girl seems like the only person who can help him. He can barely whisper:

PAUL

... a phone. I need a phone...

The girl stares at him, uncomprehending. Paul mimes putting a phone receiver to his ear.

PAUL

A phone. I need to make a call.

The child understands. She turns and points across the room to a pair of phone booths hidden in an alcove.

Paul drags himself from the corner and starts to stagger toward it. His legs are weak.

The child steps over and takes him by the hand, as if to support him. She pulls him toward the booth. Paul looks down at her, amused. She points again to the booth in the corner. Paul grits his teeth into a smile and allows her to lead him to the phone booth.

Paul opens the folding door and steps in. He takes some Japanese coins from his pocket and hands several to the girl with a nod of thanks.

He closes the door and pulls out the wet paper with Mieko's neat handwriting on it. It's blurred but readable.

As he dials the number, he notices the girl is still waiting for him outside the booth. The line clicks through. Mieko answers in Japanese.

PAUL

Hello...

MIEKO (O.S.)

Yes?

Paul doesn't know what to say, where to begin. He wipes the rainwater from his hair and debates.

MIEKO (O.S.)

Hello? Hello? Mr. Racine? Is that you?

PAUL

Yes...

MIEKO (O.S.)

Are you alright? We heard that ninjas attacked the hospital.
Are you safe?

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

PAUL
I don't know.

MIEKO (O.S.)
I will get Takeda. We'll come
and find you.

74 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

74

Damako pauses near the stairwell. He is certain that Paul went this way, but sidewalks on both sides are empty. He notices the lights coming from the pachinko parlor below.

75 INT. PACHINKO PARLOR - NIGHT

75

Damako enters and surveys the surroundings.

He notices a puddle of fresh rainwater on the white tile floor. He follows the trail through the rows of pachinko machines.

He finds the corner where Paul rested. Rainwater and red blood. His eyes trace the blood spots onward to the phone booths. The girl stands guard outside.

Inside the booth, Paul spots the rain drenched Damako through the glass door. After a flash of eye contact, Damako turns away to play a pachinko machine.

TAKEDA (O.S.)
You think they're following you?

PAUL
I don't know.

Paul reaches into his pocket and feels for his gun.

PAUL
But I can't wait for you here.
I may need to run...

TAKEDA (O.S.)
Can you get to the railway station? It's just half a mile.

PAUL
I won't make it...
(glancing at the girl)
How do you say "get me a taxi"
in Japanese?

TAKEDA
Takushi o yonde kudasai.

Paul opens the booth door. The girl looks up at him.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

PAUL
Takushi o yonde kudasai!

The child nods and runs off toward the front entrance.
Paul shuts the door.

PAUL
I'll meet you there in twenty
minutes. Stand in the open.
I'll find you.

TAKEDA (O.S.)
Are you sure you can do it?

PAUL
We'll see.

Paul hangs up. He takes a piece of root out of the bag Mieko gave him. He puts it in his mouth and bites on it, hoping it will relieve the pain.

He watches Damako innocently playing pachinko. He notices black tabi boots under Damako's trenchcoat.

Paul opens the door and steps out of the booth. Damako watches him out of the corner of his eye as he navigates toward the front of the pachinko parlor.

Damako draws a shuriken from his coat and palms it in his hand. He slowly stalks after Paul.

Paul deliberately bumps into one of the pachinko PLAYERS. He bumps into ANOTHER and then slaps ONE on the back.

PAUL
Stop playing! Don't you know
this is just a form of gambling!

ALL THE PLAYERS rise and stare at the stranger. Paul shouts at them, but his eyes are on Damako as he backs away. A crowd forms between him and Damako.

PAUL
Can't you see, gambling leads to
moral ruin! It must be stopped!

Damako pauses as all eyes tensely focus on Paul. His fingers twitch around his shuriken.

Paul suddenly yanks out his gun and fires into one of the machines. Panicked by the insane foreigner, the Players turn and run in the opposite direction, toward Damako. Paul ducks and runs toward the entrance..

As everyone flees, Damako shoves them aside trying to get through. He sees Paul escape out the front door.

76 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

76

Paul runs up the steps of the stairwell. The girl stands in the rain talking to the DRIVER of a parked taxi. Paul swings open the passenger door and tosses the child inside.

He spins toward the stairwell and fires at it. Damako has just emerged and ducks down to avoid the fire. Paul fires once more and jumps into the taxi.

77 INT. TAXI

77

Paul points the gun at the taxi driver.

PAUL

GO!!

The terrified Driver doesn't understand English, but he understands that. He stomps on the accelerator.

78 EXT. STREET

78

Damako watches the taxi disappear, rain trickling down his face. He pockets his shuriken. He is as good as dead now. Kinjo will not allow him to see the light of morning.

79 INT. TAXI

79

Paul has the gun loosely pointed at the driver. The girl looks at him, frightened. Paul smiles and winks at her. He leans forward and speaks in a firm, bank robber voice.

PAUL

Take me to the rail station!

The driver, staring ahead in terror, shakes his head.

PAUL

No English?

The driver shrugs nervously. Paul lowers his gun.

PAUL

Great.

He looks at the girl and mimes a train with his hands.

PAUL

Train. You know. Choo-choo.

He makes train chugging sounds and whistles like a train. His hand stops and his fingers mime people climbing aboard.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

PAUL
Railroad. Choo-choo.

GIRL
Densha!

She smiles brightly at Paul.

PAUL
Right. I think so. Tell him.

Paul points ahead. The girl leans over the front seat and speaks to the driver quickly in Japanese. He nods.

PAUL
Got it? Train station. Train?

The driver nods.

DRIVER
Train.

Paul settles back. The girl sits close, smiling proudly.

PAUL
They're probably going to take me to the toy store.

80 EXT. TOKYO STREET - NIGHT

80

The taxi rushes through the wet streets.

81 EXT. TOKYO BULLET TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

81

Takeda and Mieko stand in an open area of the station. Next to them are two large pieces of luggage.

82 INT. TAXI - NIGHT

82

Paul dozes in the back of the taxi, the gun drooping from his fingers. He awakens with a start. The girl and the driver are staring at him. Paul clutches his gun.

PAUL
Why have we stopped?

He looks out the window and sees the bright lights of the train station. The rain has turned into a light, misty sprinkle. He rubs his head, trying to wake up.

PAUL
Oh. Sorry about the gun. It was just a little joke. A joke.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

82

Paul hides the gun in his overcoat. He smiles and laughs. The driver forces a laugh. Paul pulls out his wallet and hands several large bills to the driver.

PAUL

Take the girl home. Okay?

The driver doesn't understand but he nods, humoring him. Paul opens the door and steps out. The girl slides across the seat to follow, but Paul gently pushes her back.

PAUL

Oh, no! You've had enough adventure for one night.

Paul leans in and gives her a kiss on the forehead.

PAUL

'Bye, Angel. Thanks for the help.

Paul closes the door. The girl peers through the window at him. He gives her a small wave. She waves back sadly. The taxi drives off. Paul limps toward the rear of the station. He slips silently into the darkness.

83 EXT. TOKYO BULLET TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

83

Takeda and Mieko wait. The station is mostly empty at this hour. Paul stands in the shadows, watching them. He wants to be certain they are alone. He limps toward them.

Takeda and Mieko see Paul appear like a ghost, his face pale and somber. Mieko notices his blood soaked pants.

MIEKO

You're wounded!

PAUL

Nothing new.

Mieko and Takeda rush to Paul's side and help support him. They each take an arm and carry him to a bench.

TAKEDA

Were you followed?

PAUL

No.

They set Paul down on the bench. Takeda smiles admiringly.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

TAKEDA

I'm impressed, Mr. Racine. No one's escaped the Makato before. Now you've done it twice.

PAUL

It's not a skill I want to keep practicing. When do we leave?

TAKEDA

There is a 5 a.m. bullet train for Mihara. We can take a boat from there to my island.

Paul lies back wearily on the bench. Mieko sits next to him and unbelted his overcoat. His midsection is soaked with blood.

MIEKO

He's losing blood. I'll re-bandage him in the bathroom. He needs dry clothes.

84 INT. DEPOT BATHROOM - NIGHT

84

Takeda helps Paul into the bathroom while Mieko carries one of the luggage bags. Paul leans up against the sink while Mieko strips off his overcoat.

TAKEDA

Something of mine should fit him. I'll make arrangements for a boat to meet us at the port. Lock the door when I leave.

Mieko nods. Takeda exits and Mieko locks the door. She opens the suitcase and pulls out some clothes and a small medical kit. Paul leans dizzily against the sink.

PAUL

I feel so cold.

Mieko turns on some hot water and lets it run. She rips open his bloodied shirt and unwraps his ruined bandages.

85 INT. HOT TUB / DREAM - NIGHT

85

Kirina stands in the hot tub. Steam rises from the hot water. Paul moves through the water and takes her in his arms. They kiss passionately.

There is a vivid slash of scarlet blood across her neck. Paul pulls back in horror. He starts sinking. The hot tub is filled with boiling blood. Paul screams.

86 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

4
86

Paul wakes up with a start as Mieko places the steaming cloth on his forehead.

MIEKO

Easy, easy. It is only water.

Hot water is still running in the sink. Paul is shaken. Fresh bandages wrap his stomach and neck wounds. Mieko takes the cloth from his forehead and resoaks it.

MIEKO

Did you have a vision?

Mieko runs the warm cloth along Paul's arms and shoulders.

PAUL

Vision? No. A hallucination maybe. I keep having them.

MIEKO

It is the poison from the shurikens.

She gently touches one of the scars on Paul's face.

MIEKO

The ninja use it because it can quickly paralyze the brain. But it's not always used to kill. Some think that in small doses it helps you to see into the world of spirits.

She soaks the cloth in water.

PAUL

I'll bring some next time I go to a Grateful Dead concert.

Mieko smiles.

87 EXT. NINJA TRAINING CAMP - NIGHT

87

Shifting shadows cast by torches dance through the camp. Damako sleeps in the dirt, his neck tied to a wooden stake. His body is bruised and his hands bound behind his back. A shadow falls over him. His eyes snap open.

Kinjo stands above wielding a tanto. He kneels beside him. (THEY SPEAK IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.)

KINJO

You know I am not a man who gives a second chance.

DAMAKO

- yes, lord...

KINJO

Then you know what it would mean for me to grant you one.

Damako stares at Kinjo with amazement.

KINJO

I've learned that Racine is leaving on a train in a few hours. If you kill him, I may let you live.

Kinjo uses the tanto to cut Damako's hands free. He stands and drops it. The point sticks into the ground a few inches from Damako's face.

Kinjo turns and strides away. Damako snatches up the tanto and cuts his neck free from the stake. Kinjo calls back as he walks toward the temple.

KINJO

Take enough men this time. Someone is helping him. Kill everyone on the train if you have to. But do not fail!

Damako pulls himself out of the dirt. The torchlight flickers on his face. Nothing will stop him this time.

88 INT. KINJO'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - NIGHT

88

Kinjo steps in and slides the door closed.

KINJO

I sent Damako as you advised.

Akara kneels in the center of the room.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

KINJO

This is what I am reduced to.
To send a failure to fail again.

AKARA

Damako will not fail you twice.
By noon Racine will be dead.

KINJO

Let us hope.

Kinjo goes to Akara and kneels in front of her. There is great pain and anger in his face.

KINJO

I cannot rest. I am haunted
every night.

AKARA

By the man, or the woman?

KINJO

Woman. The man is just a stain
that won't wash away. But Kirina...
why would anyone want such a
spirit dead? Can no one see
beneath a shade of skin, the shape
of an eye? When I first came
here, all the others, Damako, even
you my Akara, treated me as an
inferior because I was an ainoko.
Kenpachi never thought I'd make it
past ten...

AKARA

But you are our lord now. Kenpachi
willingly made you his heir. We
all grew to respect you. To
worship you...

KINJO

TO FEAR ME! I was too strong. He
knew I'd take what he didn't give.
And which of you saw me for what I
was until the scarlet covering my
hands burned your eyes?

Akara bows deeply.

AKARA

Lord, this ghost is filling your
head with pain. Making you
weak. Did you have such
thoughts before her?

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

88

Kinjo stares down at her.

KINJO

I thought they were gone from my
mind long ago.

AKARA

I will go with Damako. I will
see that this ghost dies. Then
it will be as it was.

89 EXT. TOKYO - PRE-DAWN

89

Sunlight peeks over the distant hills and warms the night
sky. A bullet train roars down the tracks at high speed.

90 EXT. TOKYO BULLET TRAIN STATION - PRE-DAWN

90

Early commuters fill the station, waiting for the morning
train. Takeda stands guard, watching the crowds.

Paul, dressed in clean clothes, dozes on a bench. Mieko
sits nearby, watching over him. We HEAR the sound of the
approaching Shinkansen, bullet train. Takeda steps over.

TAKEDA

It is time. Can he make it?

Mieko nods. She gently jostles Paul. He wakes up sharply.

MIEKO

The train is coming. We must go.

Takeda and Mieko help Paul to his feet. They grab their
luggage and head for the embarking area. Takeda's eyes
scan the growing crowds.

TAKEDA

They're here.

PAUL

What do you mean?

TAKEDA

The ninja are in the crowd.
They followed you after all.

PAUL

I don't see them.

TAKEDA

They are masters of disguise,
but I can tell they are here.

Paul looks through the crowds. There could be dozens of
ninja in disguise, how can one tell?

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

PAUL

Then we shouldn't get on the train.

TAKEDA

They'll find us either way. It's best to keep moving.

Takeda hands the tickets to the TICKET TAKER. The three step aboard the train.

At another boarding point, we see Damako, dressed in a golfing outfit, his face still bruised, approaching the train.

Behind him are half a dozen other STRONG-LOOKING MEN in golf outfits. They all carry golf bags. Damako hands his ticket to ANOTHER TICKET TAKER and smiles.

91 INT. TRAIN CORRIDOR - PRE-DAWN

91

Takeda carries the luggage through the crowds in the compartment. Paul limps after him with Mieko's help. Automatic doors open as they pass into a new compartment.

92 EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAWN

92

The last people have boarded the Shinkansen. The doors close. The train pulls out of the station.

93 INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAWN

93

TWO CONTROLMEN sit comfortably as the highly automated train proceeds through its preprogrammed routines.

It continues to pick up speed. Displays show the train's location and arrival time for the next station. A high girlish voice calls in Japanese from next compartment.

GIRL (O.S.)

Tea and cakes, please.

A controlman crosses to the automatic door and hits the button. It slides open. Akara, dressed in a female train employee uniform, steps in with a tray of tea and cakes.

CONTROLMAN

You're new, aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

As the Controlman moves aside to make room for her, he sees Damako coming in after her.

CONTROLMAN

Excuse me, you're not allowed...

Damako grabs him by the head and in one quick, vicious motion, snaps his neck. The controlman drops dead.

The other controlman jumps up, but Akara produces a tanto from under her tray and stabs it up through his neck.

Damako's other men quickly join them, dragging in the golf bags. They seal the door behind them.

94 INT. TRAIN CORRIDOR - DAWN

94

Takeda leads Paul and Mieko through the train.

Passengers settle into their berths. Paul stumbles and falls to his knees. Mieko tries to pull him up, but she can't.

PAUL

My legs are numb. I can't move...

Takeda tosses one of his suitcases away and grabs Paul with his other hand.

TAKEDA

Come, we must go on. We cannot fight them here.

95 INT. LOUNGE CAR - MORNING

95

People sit comfortably in a lounge sipping drinks as Takeda and Mieko carry Paul into the car.

TAKEDA

They'll start at the front of the train and work back. That way they can search every compartment.

The passengers stare as the two set Paul down on a small couch. Paul is barely conscious.

TAKEDA

This is it. I think I can hold them off here. Get everyone out of the room.

Takeda strips off his coat and rolls up his shirt sleeves.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

* 95

MIEKO

(in Japanese)

Everyone! There are assassins
aboard. You must go to the rear
of the train.

The crowd stares, disbelieving, until Takeda rips open his remaining suitcase. It is filled with weapons. He lifts out a long katana and draws it from its scabbard. The blade gleams in the morning light.

At the sight of the sword, everyone runs for the back door.

96 INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAWN

96

Damako and the others, including Akara, open the golf bags and change into white ninja uniforms. They put on their masks and strap on swords. Damako checks the controls.

DAMAKO

It's set on automatic. It will not stop until it reaches Mihara. Between now and then, we kill everyone on board.

This seems extreme, even to the other ninjas.

ANOTHER NINJA

Everyone?

DAMAKO

Everyone! Last time he used the crowd to cover his escape. I will not make the same mistake twice. Everyone dies.

* * * *

They glance at Akara whose eyes are polished stone.

AKARA

We'll fill the train with blood to send a message to the world. No one escapes the Makato!

* * *

97 EXT. RAILWAY - MORNING

97

The train roars across the tracks at an incredible pace.

98 INT. LOUNGE - MORNING

98

Mieko assembles a break-apart bow while Takeda drags the semi-conscious Paul out of sight behind the bar.

MIEKO

What about all the people between us and them?

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

98

TAKEDA

Once we have prepared here I
will go and warn them.

Mieko lays a sword near and picks up the bow and arrows.

MIEKO

I'm ready.

Takeda nods. He picks up his sword and strides toward the door leading to the front of the train.

99 EXT. JAPAN COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING

99

The Shinkansen hurtles through the countryside.

100 INT. TRAIN CORRIDOR - MORNING

100

Damako and the others make their way toward the rear of the train. Damako kicks open the door to a berth.

101 INT. BERTH - MORNING

101

TWO WOMEN sit talking in the berth as Damako bursts in. They scream. Damako draws his sword and cuts one of their necks. He thrusts his sword point into the other.

102 INT. TRAIN CORRIDOR - MORNING

102

Takeda makes his way toward the front of the train, sword in hand. He pounds on the doors of the berths. People open their doors and peer outside.

TAKEDA

Assassins! Run! Run to the
rear of the train!

That, and Takeda's gleaming blade, is enough. The people begin to run to the rear. Takeda continues to pound on doors until everyone in the car has fled.

103 INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

103

Damako and the other ninja slash their way through the car with swords, tantos and sickles.

By now the screams have driven everyone from their berths. As they try to escape, they are cut down by the ninjas' bloody weapons. Damako shouts as he strides ahead.

DAMAKO

Everyone dies! Everyone!

104 INT. LOUNGE - MORNING

104

Crowds of people run through the lounge toward the rear of the train. Mieko drives them on.

MIEKO

Hurry! You will be safe in the next car.

105 INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

105

Crowds flee past Takeda. He pushes his way forward. As he hears the screams ahead he quickens his pace.

TAKEDA

Run!

106 INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

106

Damako cuts down a MAN who attempts to escape.

He spins and kicks open the door of a berth, attacking the people inside. The other ninja continue past.

107 INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

107

Takeda steps into a compartment and hides his sword behind his body. Ninja enter from the other end, chasing passengers like wolves after sheep.

Takeda strides toward them pushing through the last of the fleeing passengers.

The front ninja is surprised to see Takeda, dressed in a designer shirt and loosened tie, casually approaching.

The ninja raises his sword to strike Takeda.

But in a blinding flash, Takeda's sword appears from behind and slashes deeply across the ninja's chest before he can bring down his own.

There is no need for a second cut. Takeda calmly turns and walks back to the door.

The ninja stands frozen for a moment and then collapses. The other ninjas behind him are stunned.

As they see Takeda about to escape out the door, they hurl shurikens after him.

Takeda bounces them off the blade of his sword like a pro baseballer bunting pitches by little leaguers. With a confident grin he steps back and the automatic door closes.

108 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

108

Takeda hits the lock button over the automatic door. He continues back toward the lounge.

109 INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

109

The other ninja rush to the door. It doesn't open. They pound on the plexiglas. Across the compartment Damako shouts.

DAMAKO

Break it down! Quickly!

Two ninja smash their shoulders against the door. Damako kneels over the dead ninja and examines the massive cut. They are dealing with an expert.

110 INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

110

The ninja shatter through the plexiglas and three rush down the corridor after Takeda.

One passes a curtain covering a phone booth. But as the next goes by a blade stabs through it and skewers him.

As the ninja falls dead, Takeda leaps out of the booth. With two clean cuts of his sword he kills the ninja ahead of and behind him. As they fall, Takeda steps over the bodies and continues on.

Damako, Akara and rest of the ninja enter the compartment. Damako sees three more dead.

DAMAKO

Careful! Spread out.

111 INT. LOUNGE - MORNING

111

Takeda steps into the room and abruptly ducks around the corner. The automatic door closes. He raises his sword and nods at Mieko.

Mieko draws up her bow with an arrow ready.

The automatic door opens and Akara bursts into the room after Takeda. An arrow slices into her chest.

As she falls, another ninja leaps in, spinning shuriken at Mieko. As Mieko ducks out of the way, Takeda steps out from behind and cuts him down.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

Another ninja springs in and spins out a chain. The weighted end hits Takeda in the face and knocks him back. Another swing wraps around Takeda's sword and catches it.

The ninja tries to pull Takeda in to cut him with a sickle.

Mieko takes aim with her bow to kill the ninja, but Damako leaps in and slices her bow in half with his sword point.

Mieko grabs her sword as Damako rushes to attack her.

Takeda tries to free his sword from the chain while keeping away from the sickle.

The force of Damako's attack immediately puts Mieko on the defensive. She backs away, trying desperately to hold off Damako's strong blows.

Paul rises from behind the bar. He sees that Mieko is in trouble.

Takeda sees Mieko and Damako. With a slick jujitsu move, he catches the sickle and forces it back into the ninja's own neck. He frees his sword from the chain.

He sees Paul out of the corner of his eye. Paul has drawn his gun and prepares to fire at Damako.

Damako knocks Mieko's sword from her hand. Damako kicks Mieko hard in the stomach and she falls to the ground. He raises his sword.

Paul aims his gun. Just as he pulls the trigger, Takeda grabs Paul's wrist and yanks the pistol away. The bullet rips through a window. Two hundred mile-an-hour wind screams through the tiny hole and cracked glass.

The sound of the gunshot stops Damako. He turns toward Paul and Takeda.

Takeda rips the gun from Paul's hand and hurls it away. It smashes through the broken glass. The wind howls through the gaping hole and fills the room like a hurricane.

Paul stares at Takeda in amazement. Takeda shouts angrily.

TAKEDA

NO GUNS!

Damako eyes them with amusement. Takeda calls out to him.

TAKEDA

Come, ninja! You have one last fight!

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:-

111

Damako's eyes smile. He leaves Mieko on the floor and approaches Takeda.

The two slowly approach each other. The wind swirls around them.

Paul limps to Mieko's side. She is buckled in pain. A streak of blood comes from her mouth. Paul tries to help her up. He can't. Paul looks Takeda and Damako, debating what to do. Mieko touches his shoulder.

(X)
(X)
(X)

MIEKO

Don't interfere. Takeda wants to fight him alone.

PAUL

That's fine for him, but what happens to us if he loses? I don't want to take him on.

MIEKO

Takeda will not lose. He has trained all his life for this.

Damako's blade strikes. Takeda blocks it, but it slips in enough to nick his neck.

(X)

With a quick flash Takeda's own sword slashes across Damako's sword arm. Damako falls back. Takeda's blade cuts down through Damako's chest.

(X)

Blood flows freely, Damako drops his sword. The two men stand inches from each other as Damako dies. His eyes stare at Takeda with a burning anger and then glaze over. He falls to the ground, dead.

Takeda reaches up and touches the blood oozing from his neck. He kneels next to Damako, weary from the battle.

(X)

TAKEDA

Mr. Racine. Come here.

Paul limps over to Damako's dead body.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

TAKEDA

I'm sorry about your gun, but I cannot allow bullets to be fired wildly in the midst of a battle. You might have accidentally hit Mieko or myself.

Paul says nothing. Takeda pulls the mask from Damako's bloody face. He tilts the unwounded side toward Paul.

TAKEDA

Is this the man who killed Kirina?

PAUL

No.

TAKEDA

Are you sure?!

PAUL

Of course I'm sure! You think I'd forget what he looked like?

Takeda moves over and rips the mask from another ninja.

TAKEDA

Is this him? Or this?

Takeda grabs the masks from the remaining ninja.

PAUL

No, no, no. None of these are him.

Anger and frustration grows within Takeda. He rushes toward the door leading to the rear of the train.

TAKEDA

Come. Quickly!

Takeda runs down the corridor, sword still in hand. Paul limps after him.

112 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING

112

The Shinkansen roars along its tracks.

113 INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

113

Takeda rips the mask from the first ninja he killed. Paul limps up and glances at his face.

PAUL

That's not him either.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

Takeda seems overcome with frustration. His hand presses tightly against the wound on his neck.

TAKEDA

You are absolutely sure!?

PAUL

(softly but firm)

None of these men are the man who killed Kirina. I am sure.

Takeda takes a breath and calms himself.

TAKEDA

The battle has taken its toll on my nerves. I had hoped this would come to a quick end. Unfortunately, it is only the beginning.

114 EXT. MIHARA - DAY

114

The train rushes toward the seaside city of Mihara.

115 INT. LOUNGE - DAY

115

Mieko bandages Takeda's wound. Paul stands nearby.

TAKEDA

When we arrive, slip into the crowd as they depart. I don't want the police to find you. Mieko and I will talk to them.

PAUL

Where shall I go?

TAKEDA

My man will be waiting for us. He will find you. Tell him we'll meet at the dock.

116 EXT. MIHARA TRAIN STATION - DAY

116

Panic-stricken crowds flow through the debarkation exits. POLICE OFFICERS push onto the train. Some officers scan the crowds, others interview people at random, but the crowd is too large to stop.

Paul shuffles along with the rest, keeping a low profile. He makes it past the gate and into the station lobby. As he breaks away from the crowd he nearly runs into a stern young man named SUMATO. Sumato bows.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

116

SUMATO
Mr. Racine. Follow me.

117 INT. TRAIN LOUNGE - DAY

117

Takeda and Mieko are interviewed by a LIEUTENANT as POLICE TECHNICIANS take pictures of the ninja bodies.

LIEUTENANT
How did you know that ninja would attack?

TAKEDA
I did not know. I just happened to be on the train at the time.

LIEUTENANT
Armed with a katana and bow?

TAKEDA
I was doing an exhibition in Tokyo. I have been a teacher of Kenjutsu for many years. You can check my references.

LIEUTENANT
I have no doubt you're an expert...

He glances back at the dead bodies.

LIEUTENANT
... but it's hard to believe you happened upon this accidentally. What do you know about the ninja attacks in Tokyo?

TAKEDA
Only what I read in the papers.

AN OFFICER comes up and motions the Lieutenant aside, speaking to him in a low voice.

OFFICER
His story checks out. Everyone says he rescued them from the ninja. They say he's a hero.

LIEUTENANT
A hero, eh?
(beat)
Alright, that's all for now.
But you'll have to appear before an inquiry later.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

TAKEDA

As you wish.

Takeda stands, picking up his sheathed sword and case.

LIEUTENANT

I'm afraid you will have to leave your sword.

TAKEDA

Leave my sword?

LIEUTENANT

It's evidence. If we decide to file charges against you...

TAKEDA

I cannot allow anyone to handle my sword.

The firmness of Takeda's voice unnerves the Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT

I am sorry. I do understand. But we have rules. We'll treat it with respect, but you must leave the sword here.

Takeda stares at him coldly and draws his sword slowly. The Lieutenant stands rigid, unsure what Takeda is doing.

Takeda places the point of the sword on the ground at an angle. With a sudden stomp kick he breaks the blade in half. It cracks with the sound of a living thing dying.

He drops the broken sword to the ground and exits the room. Mieko follows after him.

The Officer turns to the Lieutenant, impressed.

OFFICER

A true samurai. He is a hero.

The Lieutenant looks down at the broken blade.

LIEUTENANT

The time for those kind of heroes has past.

118 EXT. PIER - DAY

118

The docks are filled with local fishing boats. FISHERMEN mend nets and WOMEN cook fish over small open fires.

An old wooden motorboat is tied to the far end of the pier. Paul rests in the aft section. Sumato stands guard.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

Takeda and Mieko's footsteps echo across the wood plank dock. As they step into the boat, Sumato leaps out and unties the moorings. Paul smiles at Takeda.

PAUL

So how'd you talk your way past
the police?

Takeda says nothing. He walks into the cabin and starts the motors. Paul looks at Mieko curiously. She sits down next to him and lays her hand reassuringly on his.

MIEKO

It's alright. We're safe.

Sumato casts off the last rope and pushes the boat away from the pier. He leaps aboard as Takeda guns the motor.

119 EXT. BAY - DAY

119

The sun is high overhead as the boat moves through the sea. An island comes into view. It is an impressive sight. Dark rocks line the beaches, and above a green ring of forest is a magnificent hilltop castle tower.

PAUL

What is that? A castle?

MIEKO

It's the main tower, over 400 years old. Takeda's rebuilding it as a martial arts school, a sanctuary from modern life.

120 EXT. DOCK - DAY

120

The motorboat approaches a small private dock leading onto the island. Sumato leaps off the boat and ties it down.

121 EXT. TAKEDA CASTLE - DAY

121

Takeda leads Paul through the castle training grounds. Mieko and Sumato follow.

Young MEN with scarlet headbands spar against each other with wooden swords. Further away, other students repair stone walls and wood barracks.

Everything about the island, and the people on it, harks to a warrior age of long ago, as if the island has somehow been suspended in time since the days of ancient Japan.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

PAUL

I would like to get word to my company. Tell them I'm alright.

TAKEDA

That would be a mistake. Kinjo will learn of your whereabouts and come here too quickly.

PAUL

Too quickly? Why should he find me at all?

TAKEDA

You're tired. Rest. I'll tell you everything tomorrow. Mieko will take you to your room.

Paul nods. He is tired. Takeda bows and strides off.

122 INT. SWORDSMITH'S SHOP - DAY

122

Takeda steps into a swordmaker's shop filled with iron bars, tools, and a long firing furnace. (THEY SPEAK IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.)

TAKEDA

Ohshima! Are you here?

OHSHIMA, a small, round old man with a pixyish look in his eyes, enters from another room. He drinks from a jug of homebrewed sake and is perpetually intoxicated.

OHSHIMA

What now?

TAKEDA

I need a new sword.

OHSHIMA

What's wrong with the old one?

TAKEDA

I broke it.

OHSHIMA

Don't blame me. You weren't handling it right.

TAKEDA

I broke it deliberately. I want you to make me another. It must be the best you have ever made.

Ohshima takes a sip from his jug.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

OHSHIMA

Every sword I make is the best I have ever made.

TAKEDA

This sword will kill Kinjo.

Ohshima looks at Takeda seriously.

OHSHIMA

A sword cannot kill Kinjo. Only a man can do that.

TAKEDA

I'm the man. Make the sword.

Ohshima takes a sip from his jug and turns away.

OHSHIMA

I'll make a sword. Leave me alone.

TAKEDA

You must make it quickly.

OHSHIMA

Go away. It will be done when it's done.

Takeda waits a moment and then leaves. Ohshima picks up a clump of iron and examines it.

OHSHIMA

Dear Mr. Iron, do you wish to be a sword that defeats Kinjo?

Naturally, the iron says nothing.

OHSHIMA

No? Very well.

He tosses it away and grabs another slab.

123 INT. KINJO'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - NIGHT

123

The room is dark but for a few flickering candles. Kinjo sits alone, his head lowered in meditation or sleep.

Ryuma silently enters. He kneels before Kinjo and bows to the floor. He doesn't know how to break the news.

RYUMA

My Lord...

Kinjo does not move.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

123

KINJO

Go away.

RYUMA

My Lord... they...

KINJO

Are dead. I know. I sent my best men to be slaughtered by a ghost only I could kill.

RYUMA

Akara... she was also...

KINJO

Leave me.

Ryuma bows and exits. Kinjo slowly stands and raises his head. He clinches his fists and fills the room with a terrifying cry of anguish.

As silence slowly returns, Kinjo, shivering with tension, lowers his head, crippled with remorse and sorrow.

But not for Akara.

KINJO

Kirina...

124 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

124

Paul sleeps uneasily on a futon in a traditional Japanese bedroom on the castle grounds.

125 INT. TEA HOUSE / DREAM - DAY

125

Paul kneels in a beautiful, bright teahouse. It is in a fairy tale place, with a flowing stream and cherry blossoms blooming everywhere.

Kirina, made up as geisha, serves him tea in a traditional ceremony. Paul sips on the tea and watches Kirina. She is hauntingly beautiful. Her face shines in the sunlight.

Kirina reaches down by her knees and picks up a long object wrapped in red silk cloth. She presents it to Paul.

Paul takes the object and unwraps it. There is a burning flash of steel. It is a sword.

126 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

126

Paul opens his eyes slowly. He lies naked under the covers of the bed.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED:

126

The clothes that he wore yesterday are gone, and in their place is a blue kimono and sandals. Mieko kneels next to him with a tray of breakfast and tea.

MIEKO

Did you sleep well?

She pours a cup of tea and hands it to him.

PAUL

Yes. Quite well. In fact, I dreamt about drinking tea.

(sipping)

This is good.

MIEKO

It will help heal you.

PAUL

With service like this, I don't know if I want to be healed.

MIEKO

You are feeling better today.

127 EXT. TAKEDA CASTLE - DAY

127

Mieko and Paul tour the training area as students practice sword cutting techniques on bamboo. In the kimono and slippers, he almost blends into the Japanese surroundings.

PAUL

Do you train too?

MIEKO

Mostly I teach.

PAUL

The sword?

MIEKO

No, I'm only fair with one. But few are better with the bow. I teach archery classes each day.

128 EXT. PRIVATE COURTYARD - DAY

128

Mieko leads Paul into a secluded part of the castle grounds. Moss grows on the high stone walls, and the sound of a trickling fountain fills the area.

Takeda stands alone, dressed in traditional attire, performing iai (quick draw sword techniques) with stunning skill and precision. Paul and Mieko watch him from afar.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

128

PAUL

Why does Takeda train alone?

MIEKO

He can only improve when he is alone. No one here has the skill to challenge him.

Takeda's sword flashes out and returns smoothly to its sheath. His eyes stare ahead as if in a trance.

MIEKO

I have to teach my class. You may stay and watch Takeda, but don't approach or disturb him.

PAUL

Maybe I'll explore a little.

MIEKO

Feel free.

Mieko exits. Paul watches Takeda for another minute, fascinated by the spinning sword.

129 EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS - DAY

129

Paul wanders alone along old stone walls of the sprawling castle, studying its architecture.

Ahead of him he sees Ohshima carrying two heavy buckets of coal. There is something amusing about the small, round old man hobbling along with the enormous wooden pails.

As Paul catches up to him, Ohshima glances over at the bigger, unburdened man. Paul nods politely.

Ohshima stops. He places a bucket in Paul's hand and then continues hobbling on his way. After a moment of confusion, Paul follows after him with the bucket.

As Paul catches up, Ohshima glances over and stops again. He puts the other bucket in Paul's other hand and continues on. Paul half smiles and struggles with the heavy buckets. Ohshima races ahead and into his workshop. Paul follows.

130 INT. SWORDSMITH'S SHOP - DAY

130

Ohshima steps in and immediately locates his jug. He takes a drink. Paul comes down after him, panting from the load. Paul nearly sets the pails down when Ohshima calls out.

OHSHIMA

Ie!

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

Ohshima points across the room to a large coal storage bin.

Paul, not quite sure he's enjoying this game, carries the buckets to the bin and dumps the coal inside.

Ohshima mumbles something positive in Japanese and takes another sip from his jug. He glances at the jug and, feeling guilty, reluctantly offers it to Paul.

Paul, assuming it is water from the way Ohshima has been guzzling it, takes a long drink and practically chokes.

Ohshima bursts into laughter. Paul, coughing, laughs too.

131 INT. SWORDSMITH'S SHOP - DAY

131

Ohshima stokes a fire in his forge to melt the iron. He studies the color of the slowly melting slabs.

Paul enters with another load of coal. He dumps it into the almost filled bin. His clothes are covered with soot.

Ohshima pats him on the back and indicates that it's enough coal. He hands Paul the jug. Paul takes a sip.

As Ohshima's concentration returns to the fire, Paul glances around the shop. It is filled with a fascinating array of tools, containers, and rusted or broken weapons.

Paul spies a rusted sword propped up in a corner. He brushes off the cobwebs and dust and gingerly picks it up.

It is not gleaming and sharp like the swords he has seen in the training areas. It is shorter and less curved, the handle longer and undecorated. Yet, as Paul holds it in his hands, it is clearly familiar. Ohshima notices.

OHSHIMA

Ninjato.

Paul raises the blade up with the same grip he has seen Takeda use. He passes the blade through the air.

OHSHIMA

Dameda! Sojanai!

Ohshima, shaking his head with firm disapproval, adjusts Paul's hands into an unusual underhanded grip. Paul tries to work the sword, but it doesn't seem right.

Puzzled, Ohshima adjusts Paul's hands. Paul tries again. It feels better this time. But it is unlike any of the graceful movements he has seen the samurai use.

OHSHIMA

Joshi.

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

131

Ohshima shows Paul another movement. Unlike the samurai, whose sword flies freely, Ohshima's positions force Paul to twist and turn his whole body with each move.

Ohshima returns to his fire. Paul practices alone. The flame from the furnace glows brightly on his face.

132 OMITTED

132
(X)

133 EXT. NOODLE SHOP - DAY

In a poorer part of town, Mr. Motoqi sits with a newspaper at the outdoor counter of a noodle shop. He half heartedly works on a bowl of soba noodles. A tall figure in a black leather jacket and sunglasses sits next to him. Covering the figure's face is a surgical mask. It is Kinjo.

A waiter glances over. Kinjo coughs and waves him off.

KINJO

I'm coming down with a cold.

MR. MOTOGI

How considerate. I wouldn't want to get what you have. How did you find me here?

KINJO

It wasn't hard. I'm in town on business.

MR. MOTOGI

I haven't given you any business. And no one would want you to do any for them. Look...

He shows Kinjo the newspaper. There are pictures of the train massacre. Subtitles read: NINJAS ATTACK TRAIN.

KINJO

I want to talk to Nemura. I have some questions for him.

MR. MOTOGI

He'll never meet with you again. Have you gone mad?

KINJO

When haven't I been? Tell me where to find him.

MR. MOTOGI

I won't. This all must end now.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

KINJO

I can make you tell me.

Kinjo waves to the waiter for some noodles. Mr. Motogi looks at Kinjo, a chill runs up his spine.

MR. MOTOGI

Will you?

KINJO

Yes.

MR. MOTOGI

(softly)

His offices are in the Hideki building. It's heavily guarded.

The waiter brings a bowl and Kinjo lifts his mask enough to slurp some down.

KINJO

You found me not too far from here, remember? Dirty face, second hand clothes...

MR. MOTOGI

Yes. I remember.

KINJO

The others threw rocks at me like I was a dog. I was crying, I didn't fight back. Why'd you choose me? I didn't show any killer spirit. How could you know what was inside me?

MR. MOTOGI

I just knew. Something in your eyes.

KINJO

What?

MR. MOTOGI

Hate.

Kinjo nods. He pushes the noodles away and replaces the mask. He takes off his sunglasses and we see his red eyes.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

KINJO

Yes. I hated everyone.
Including you. There's only
been one person that made me
feel anything but hate. And you
made me kill her.

134 EXT. STREET NEAR NOODLE SHOP - DAY

134

Kinjo walks away from the noodle shop.

135 EXT. NOODLE SHOP - DAY

135

The waiter comes over to Mr. Motogi to see if he's done. He sits slumped over his bowl. The waiter calls out to him. He pushes him gently. Mr. Motogi slides to the ground. Blood runs off the counter.

136 INT. SWORDSMITH'S SHOP / MONTAGE - DAY

136

Ohshima wears an old white robe with an eboshi (black-lacquered hat) tied to his head. Wielding a huge iron hammer, he pounds the white hot iron into steel.

Ohshima carefully positions Paul's feet and shows him how to hold a long heavy hammer. He hits his toes with a stick to get him to do it right.

Paul helps Ohshima pound and fold the steel tachi over and over again giving it flexibility.

137 OMMITED

137

(X)

138 EXT. CASTLE BALCONY - NIGHT

138

Paul and Mieko stand on a balcony over the castle gardens.

PAUL

So what do you think about this
empire your brother is building?

MIEKO

There was a time when I thought
he was right about everything.
Lately... I don't know. But I do
love this island. Come, let me
show you something. Just over
that hill.

139 EXT. HOTSPRINGS - NIGHT

139

The moon is full and bright as Mieko and Paul follow a
small stream through the gardens. Steam rises from the
stream giving the air a misty, dream-like quality.

PAUL

The water's warm.

MIEKO

There's a hot spring up ahead.

They reach a small pond hidden between rocks and small
trees. Hot water bubbles from an underground spring.

MIEKO

Come.

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

139

Mieko tosses off her sandals and unwraps the obi sash of her kimono. The kimono slides from her shoulders.

Her naked skin gleams in the moonlight. She wades into the steaming water. Paul stands, uncertain.

MIEKO

Don't be shy. Enjoy the night.
The water is good for you.

Paul undoes his kimono and throws off his clothes. Bandages are still wrapped around his neck and midsection. He wades into the water.

Paul reaches her side and soaks in the water next to her.

PAUL

An ancient hot tub.

Mieko dives under the water and drenches her hair, then rises up like a mermaid.

Paul's face softens as he watches her naked body float so near to him. Unable to resist, he slips an arm around her waist and pulls her close.

Mieko's arms wrap around Paul and he holds her tightly. She kisses his neck.

Mieko raises her head and kisses him deeply on the lips.

Suddenly, the image of Kirina kissing him in the bathtub flashes through Paul's mind. He pulls back from the kiss.

Mieko knows something is wrong. Paul looks at her with a mixture of regret and sadness. He lets go of her.

PAUL

I'm sorry.. I..

Mieko's eyes are filled with hurt and anger. She wades out of the water and picks up her clothes. Paul follows.

PAUL

Mieko, I'm sorry. It isn't you.

MIEKO

(bitterly)

I know who it is.

(softer)

How can I compete with a memory?
Kirina lives in your dreams, she
touches your soul.

Mieko puts her kimono back on.

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

139

MIEKO
I'm only flesh and blood.

Paul picks up his clothes.

PAUL
It's not just her. There was another. Claire was killed in an auto accident five years ago. Kirina was the first woman I felt for since... I can't...

Mieko ties the obi around the middle of her kimono. She looks up at Paul, less angry, but still hurt.

MIEKO
So Kirina opened your heart only so that you could close it again? Do you think that's what she wanted? Life is too short to hold onto pain. Don't you know that yet?

Mieko turns and walks away. Paul doesn't follow after her.

140 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

140

Takeda stands at the door to his bedroom. He spots Mieko walking past down the hall. He calls to her.

TAKEDA
Mieko. Come here. Where is Racine?

She stops and turns toward him, head lowered to disguise how upset she is. Her voice trembles nervously.

MIEKO
He is... at the hot springs.

TAKEDA
Your hair is wet.

MIEKO
We were swimming.

Takeda eyes her curiously as if trying to read her mind.

TAKEDA
I want you to prepare my bed.

Eyes still averted, Mieko steps into Takeda's bedroom. He follows after her and closes the door.

141 INT. TAKEDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

141

Mieko silently prepares Takeda's bed. Takeda watches her.

TAKEDA

You have been spending a lot of time with Racine.

Mieko continues making the bed.

MIEKO

As you told me to.

TAKEDA

Yes. You've kept him here as I asked. But now I want you with me.

Mieko walks over, eyes still averted. Takeda takes her head in his hands and raises it. He kisses her.

142 EXT. TOKYO ALLEY - NIGHT

142

Three JAPANESE THUGS, smoking cigarettes, wearing wind breakers and carrying cellular phones, stand watch on a loading dock behind a brick yakuza office building.

A gnarled old man in filthy rags approaches, pushing a crate on rollers filled with cardboard. He pauses to collect some boxes out of a large trash bin near the platform. The thugs yell at him to go away. The old man ignores them as if he can't hear.

One thug jumps down and bounces his lit cigarette off the old man's back. He kicks him. The old man fumbles around frantically, terrified. The two on the dock laugh.

Suddenly, the thug freezes. The old man has cut apart his throat with the razor sharp sickle of a kusarigama.

As the thug falls dead, and before the others can react, the chain attached to the handle of the kusarigama swings out and wraps around the legs of one on the dock.

The old man pulls and the thug's legs fly out from under him. He falls off the platform and into the waiting blade of the kusarigama.

The last thug only has time to reach for his gun, before the old man throws a thick nail like shuriken deep into his forehead, killing him instantly.

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

147

The old man tosses off his rags to reveal the black uniform of a ninja. It is Kinjo, his face covered with makeup and grime to make him look old. He pulls his mask on and produces his sword from under the cardboard.

Kinjo pulls shoko, spiked iron bans, over his gloves and shoes. He steps into the shadows between the buildings and forces the spikes into the soft mortar between the bricks.

143 EXT. BUILDING WALL - NIGHT

143

The Tokyo skyline backlights Kinjo as he climbs up several stories of the building like a human fly.

144 EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

144

A GUARD on the roof has been trying to reach the others on his cellular phone. Worried, he crosses to the edge and looks down into the alley. He sees the three bodies.

Suddenly, a shadow rises over him. Kinjo grabs him from behind and uses the shoko spikes to rip him apart.

145 INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

145

Nemura, slightly drunk, his silk tie undone, pours whiskey over ice at an elaborate bar in his lush office. An over made-up MISTRESS in a clingy low-cut dress perches on his large desk. She picks up a photo in a chrome frame.

MISTRESS

This better be your sister..

It's a photo of Kirina, looking as mysterious and unearthly beautiful as always. Nemura takes a drink of whiskey.

NEMURA

Put it down.

MISTRESS

I don't like you having pictures of other girls around. What's so special about this one?

NEMURA

PUT IT DOWN!

The mistress defiantly tosses the picture into a metal trash can. It falls in with a loud crack of glass.

MISTRESS

There. It's down.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

Nemura furiously hurls his glass at her, missing her by inches. He leaps across the room and slaps her hard.

NEMURA

You better learn to respect me!

Nemura raises his hand to strike her again. The mistress shields her face from the coming attack.

Suddenly, everything becomes deathly quiet. The mistress looks up. Nemura is frozen, ready to strike. But his eyes are fixed across the room, toward the door.

Kinjo stands in the center of the room watching them. As if he walked in through the walls.

NEMURA

Who are you? What... Kinjo?

KINJO

Yes.

Kinjo crosses to the mistress and takes her face in his hand. She is actually quite pretty under the grotesquely red lipstick and rouge.

KINJO

Leave silently. Don't come back.

He lets go of her and she rapidly leaves the room. Kinjo stalks Nemura. Nemura quickly pushes a button.

NEMURA

How dare you come here. How did you get in?

No one responds to Nemura's call. He looks up, nervous.

NEMURA

What do you want? Your money?

KINJO

Why did you kill Kirina?

NEMURA

I didn't. You killed her.

KINJO

Why did you have her killed!?

He grabs Nemura by the throat.

NEMURA

Because she defied me!

KINJO

How!?

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

*
145

NEMURA
She asked to leave me!

KINJO
Why?!

Kinjo smashes Nemura against the wall.

KINJO
Why!

He smashes him again. Nemura begins to sob, drunkenly.

NEMURA
I don't know. I don't know.

Kinjo throws Nemura to the ground.

NEMURA
She was an ainoko. Her mother died in birth. Her pimp uncle sold her to... people worse than me. I found her in Soapland when she was seventeen. Bought her from the owner. Gave her fine clothes, jewels, everything. Expensive things!

KINJO
Why did you kill her?

NEMURA
She begged me for freedom for years. Then demanded it. Freedom from me! Boss Nemura! I'm not an old pig! I have money! Power!

He stares up at Kinjo, defiant.

NEMURA
I'm too good for a half-breed daughter of a whore! She should be grateful to lie at my feet! I told her if she left me I would kill her. I told her she would not live through a single night...

He drifts off. Tears come to his eyes. Kinjo kicks him.

KINJO
And?

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

NEMURA

.. she left me.

KINJO

You blind Fool! Didn't you
realize what she was!

Kinjo grabs Nemura off the floor and slams him against the wall. He pounds him against the wall again and again.

He lets go. Nemura slumps against the wall, dazed and pained. Kinjo draws his sword. He raises it high above his head. With one fierce stroke he cuts Nemura apart.

Kinjo's sword arm drops limply to his side. He notices the photo of Kirina in the overturned trashcan. A pool of blood spreads toward it. Kinjo picks it up

KINJO

How could anyone be so blind?
To look only at the surface of
life. There is your killer, my
Kirina, not me. Can you
understand that? I did not know
you... then. I was...

He sets the picture down gently.

KINJO

.. blind...

He wearily sheaths his ninjato.

KINJO

Forgive me, Kirina, I can't
change what I am. In our next
life perhaps we'll meet and I'll
be able to see...

146 INT. SWORDSMITH'S SHOP - DAY

146

Ohshima oils the blade of the finished katana sword. The new steel gleams even in the dim light of the shop.

In the background, Paul is working out with his rusted sword. His movements are still awkward and unusual, but he has an air of confidence about him.

Ohshima sheaths the blade in a lacquered scabbard and glances over at Paul. Paul notices Ohshima staring at him and lowers his sword.

Ohshima smiles as if there is something wicked passing through his mind. He suddenly tosses Paul the new sword, scabbard and all.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

146

Paul, surprised, drops his Ninjato and barely catches the katana. He holds it uncertainly. Ohshima laughs.

OHSHIMA

Katana wa ikimono da.

Paul draws the blade and holds it up to the light.

147 EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS - DAY

147

Takeda, Sumato, and Mieko come upon Ohshima's shop.

TAKEDA

Ohshima said my sword should be done today. Wait here.

Takeda enters the shop alone.

148 INT. SWORDSMITH'S SHOP - DAY

148

Paul passes the shiny blade of the katana through the air as Ohshima watches approvingly.

Takeda comes into the room. His face freezes in surprise and anger when he sees the blade in Paul's hand.

TAKEDA

Ohshima! What is going on here?

OHSHIMA

We are testing your sword.

TAKEDA

Idiot! How could you allow him to touch my sword!

Paul, not understanding the Japanese conversation, but detecting the hostility from Takeda, sheaths the sword. Ohshima crosses and takes it away. He offers it to Takeda.

OHSHIMA

You are too superstitious.

Takeda tensely holds the sword.

TAKEDA

Why is he here?

OHSHIMA

I like him. He is the only one on this island who doesn't think he is the reincarnation of Musashi. He is a good student.

(CONTINUED)

148 CONTINUED:

148

TAKEDA
Student of what?

OOSHIMA
The sword.

TAKEDA
You have been teaching him with
my sword!

OOSHIMA
Don't be foolish. That is his
sword.

Ohshima points to the rusted ninjato on the ground. Takeda turns sharply to Paul.

TAKEDA
(in English)
Racine, I'll see you outside.

Paul glances at Ohshima. Ohshima shrugs. Paul exits.

OOSHIMA
Takeda, you mistake superstition
for tradition. Arrogance for
honor.

Takeda draws and examines the blade. He's impressed.
Ohshima picks up his jug and takes a long drink.

TAKEDA
I'll never understand how a
drunk makes such fine swords.

OOSHIMA
Better to ask why he would make
one for you.

Takeda sheaths the sword. He snatches up the ninjato and quickly exits with both swords.

149 EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS - DAY

149*

Takeda, Sumato, and Mieko are waiting as Paul comes out of the shop. Takeda abruptly flings the Ninjato at Paul, who catches it awkwardly.

TAKEDA
Ohshima says you're interested
in the art of Kenjutsu.

PAUL
It is nothing. We were only
killing time.

(CONTINUED)

TAKEDA

Time does not die. Only people.
But come, since you have shown
an interest, I'll teach you a
lesson in the sword. Come. You
have much to learn.

Takeda draws his sword. It flashes in the sunlight. He walks up to Paul and taps Paul's blade.

MIEKO

Ijuro, no. What happened? Why..

TAKEDA

Shizuka ni shite Kudasai!
(to Paul)
Come, Racine. The lesson begins.

He pushes Paul's blade up with the tip of his sword and then smacks down on it. Paul's grip tightens.

TAKEDA

No, no, you're holding it wrong.
Kenjutsu is not a game. It is a
way of life. It does not amuse
me to see people treat a sword
as a toy.

Takeda strikes hard. Paul moves into a defensive stance.

TAKEDA

Come! Didn't that old drunkard
teach you anything?

Paul's eyes burn. Takeda whacks his blade again. Suddenly Paul raises his sword and thrusts. Takeda cleanly blocks the attack and half smiles.

TAKEDA

Good, there is the attack, but
where is the defense?

Takeda's sword knocks Paul's aside, and Takeda whips the blade up to Paul's neck. It stops, the edge brushing Paul's skin. Paul stands frozen.

Takeda stares at Paul with icy eyes, as if debating whether to plunge the point of the blade into Paul.

TAKEDA

A hundred years ago, a samurai
would not hesitate to kill you
for touching his sword.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

4
149

Takeda nudges the edge of the sword into Paul's neck. Just as it begins to cut, he pauses, resisting temptation. A tiny drop of blood flows down from the cut.

TAKEDA

In the future I expect you to treat swords with more respect. This is no game.

Paul watches Takeda walk away, understanding him for the first time. He wipes the drop of blood from his neck.

PAUL

Wait! You have not finished your lesson.

TAKEDA

It's finished. Believe me.

PAUL

No, I still have much to learn.

Paul walks to Takeda and taps his blade hard. Takeda raises his sword, anger swelling inside him.

TAKEDA

Do not mock me, Racine!

Paul strikes at Takeda. Takeda blocks it. Takeda's blade whips around toward Paul's midsection. Paul automatically blocks it with his sword. Takeda is surprised.

PAUL

Perhaps the old drunkard did teach me something..

Takeda cuts him off with another attack. Paul blocks it with difficulty and stumbles back.

TAKEDA

Ohshima knows nothing about swords except how to make them. He was playing a joke on you.

Takeda's bright, shining blade crashes against Paul's rusted one forcing him off balance. Takeda's blade whips up and the point rests against Paul's heart.

TAKEDA

A real sword fight isn't like the three musketeers. Japanese blades don't bang about like foils. They don't make neat wholes or tiny scratches. They cut through bone and rip through bodies. If I had wanted, I could have killed you ten times.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

149

PAUL

Why don't you?

Paul pushes Takeda's blade away with his hand and swings his sword. Takeda blocks it off like swatting a fly.

TAKEDA

What are you babbling about?

PAUL

I'm learning, Takeda. Finally learning. Why are you sure that Kinjo will come to this island?

TAKEDA

Because I know the way of the ninja.

Paul renews his attack, trying to get at least some kind of reaction out of Takeda, but Takeda easily blocks each attack as if Paul was moving in slow motion.

PAUL

The trail is cold by now. If he knew where I was he would have attacked long ago.

TAKEDA

You'll see. Kinjo will be here.

PAUL

He will, because you'll tell him I'm here. I'm the bait to lure Kinjo close enough so you can challenge him and prove what a mighty samurai you are!

Takeda angrily blocks Paul's sword and easily spins the blade from Paul's hands. It flies across the courtyard and lands in the dirt.

Takeda raises his sword point to Paul's face. He pushes it forward, forcing Paul to lean backwards until he stumbles and falls. Takeda stands over Paul with sword raised and ready. But Paul continues with his accusations.

PAUL

That's how Kinjo's men found us on the train. That's how you knew they were coming. While Mieko was bandaging me you somehow sent word to them. It's true, isn't it? Isn't it?

Takeda lowers his sword.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

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149**TAKEDA**

They would have found you
anyway.

PAUL

Not on a train filled with
innocent people. They were
slaughtered so you could prove
yourself.

TAKEDA

I am not responsible. The ninja
killed them. If it were not for
me they all would have died.

PAUL

None of them would have died but
for you! Except me, and I'm not
sure about that either.

Mieko goes to Paul's side to help him from the ground.

MIEKO

Paul, please, do not taunt him.
You don't know...

Paul waves Mieko away and stands by himself.

PAUL

Takeda won't hurt me. I'm his
prized lure. He also won't let
me leave. I'm your prisoner.
Isn't that right?

TAKEDA

You are free to go. But a
lesson in swordplay won't save
you from Kinjo's blade. He'll
slice you open the minute you
step off this island. If you
want to go, go! See how long
you live without my protection!

PAUL

That's exactly what I'll find
out. I'm taking the first
flight back to New York. I'll
send Kinjo a postcard. We'll
see how well he does on my turf.

Paul turns and stalks off. Takeda stands for a moment,
trying to contain his rage. He sheaths his sword and
glances to Sumato.

(CONTINUED)

149 CONTINUED:

149

TAKEDA
Get six men. And a rope.

Sumato rushes off. Mieko grabs Takeda's shoulder.

MIEKO
You can't hold him prisoner.

TAKEDA
Don't tell me what I can do! If you'd been more persuasive he wouldn't want to go...

MIEKO
Yes, I'm a lousy whore. Maybe you should be a better pimp!

Takeda slaps Mieko hard. He turns and walks away.

150 EXT. TAKEDA CASTLE - DAY

150

Paul walks down the front steps of the castle tower.

He has changed back into the western-style clothes that he borrowed earlier. Takeda waits for him with Sumato and SIX STUDENTS. He adopts a calm tone.

TAKEDA
I am sorry about our disagreement, Mr. Racine. I request that you stay.

PAUL
Request... or command?

TAKEDA
It would be foolish for you to leave...

PAUL
You think I don't know what's going on? You're preparing for a war! You really think a bunch of kids running away from city life can take on professional assassins? You're going to get them all killed to satisfy your ego. Well, I'm not going to let you. The bait is leaving.

TAKEDA
This is between me and Kinjo. No one else will get hurt if he...

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

150

PAUL

It's not between you and him.
It is between him and me. ME!
So get the hell out of my way.

Paul shoves past Takeda. Takeda grabs Paul and forces him back. Paul slugs Takeda on the chin with surprising force. The impact sends Takeda to the ground. Takeda's men move toward Paul. Takeda shouts them away.

TAKEDA

Ie!

Paul eggs Takeda on.

PAUL

Come on. You don't have a sword in your hand now. Let's see how you are with your fists.

Takeda swiftly kicks Paul's legs out from under him. Paul falls to the ground. Takeda stands. Paul climbs to his feet and Takeda uses a slick jujitsu move to flip him on his stomach and twist his arm behind his back.

TAKEDA

Racine, you have amazing tolerance for pain, but don't make me break your arm...

Paul explodes, twisting out of the hold and rolling into Takeda. He manages to land on top and punches Takeda in the face. He punches him again.

Takeda knees Paul in the midsection, right in his wounds. Paul yells in pain. Takeda flips him off and stands.

Paul, in great pain, struggles to get to his feet. Takeda calls out to his men.

TAKEDA

Grab him. Grab him before I kill him.

They yank Paul to his feet and tie his hands behind his back. Takeda wipes blood from the corner of his mouth.

TAKEDA

Lock him up somewhere safe.

They drag Paul off. Takeda turns to Sumato.

(CONTINUED)

150 CONTINUED:

150

TAKEDA

Send word to Kinjo. Tell him
that we have Racine. Tell him
he comes tonight or he won't get
another chance.

151 INT. KINJO'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS - EVENING

151

Kinjo stands in the shadows, his back turned away, as Ryuma
tells him Takeda's message. He seems only half-interested.

KINJO

Takeda? Who is this Takeda?

RYUMA

He styles himself as a samurai.
He's a skillful swordsman.
Probably the man who killed Damako
and the others. He wants to
challenge you in combat. If you
come alone.. and defeat him, Racine
will be handed to you.

Kinjo shakes his head wearily.

KINJO

So anxious to die...

RYUMA

Then send word that you accept?

KINJO

Of course. I must kill Takeda
so that I can kill Racine, so
the Makato can go on killing and
killing for another millennia.
Why spare a few lives now? I
owe hell too much already.

Ryuma stares at Kinjo, confused by his sarcastic tone.

KINJO

Do as I say! Tell him I'll be
there tonight! Let's see if
this samurai has enough skill to
put an end to it all!

152 INT. CELL - EVENING

152

Paul is in a cell with bamboo bars in the window, hands
still tied. A GUARD looms at the door. Mieko kneels as
she re-bandages the fresh blood on his stomach.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

152

MIEKO

The wounds split open again.
You shouldn't have tried to
fight Takeda.

As she looks up, Paul detects a small bruise under her eye.

PAUL

How did you get that bruise?

MIEKO

It's nothing.

PAUL

He hit you didn't he? Because
you tried to help me. What is
it with you two anyway? Just
because you're his sister--

MIEKO

I'm not his sister. I'm his
lover.

Paul closes his eyes. It's the last piece of the puzzle.

MIEKO

When you refused to come with us
at the hospital, Takeda thought
that... he believed that I could...
make you trust us more.

PAUL

It worked. So why are you
telling me now?

MIEKO

I want to be honest with you.
Kinjo is coming.

She stands.

PAUL

Mieko, this is madness. Please,
help me escape. Kinjo will
never find me.

MIEKO

You can't run forever.

She turns away from him and starts toward the door.

PAUL

Last night wasn't an act. Was
it?

Mieko hesitates for a moment, her face filled with emotion.

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

152

MIEKO

Does it... matter to you?

PAUL

Mieko, if something happened
tonight... if you were to die...

MIEKO

If I died, would you dream of me
as you do Kirina?

A half smile floats to her face. She exits.

153 INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

153

Mieko exits down the hallway when Takeda, garbed in formal
samurai attire and sword, approaches her, apologetic.

TAKEDA

Is he alright?

MIEKO

No thanks to you.

TAKEDA

Mieko, I'm sorry. I lost my
temper. Will you stand with me
tonight? I need you...

Mieko's face softens somewhat.

TAKEDA

The other students respect you,
if you were to abandon me...

MIEKO

You'd lose face? Who needs me?
You? Or your ego?

TAKEDA

We've both worked hard for this.

MIEKO

No. I didn't work for this. I
thought we were going to build a
world that would bring back what
was noble about our past, not
barbaric. Today in the
courtyard I saw the kind of
samurai that tested his sword by
killing a peasant. I'll stand
with the others tonight, I'll
fight if I have to, but not for
you. For him. And tomorrow,
after I'm sure he's free, I'm
leaving.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

154

TAKEDA

You said I'm responsible for the people killed on the train. Maybe so. But then you're responsible for Dr. Yamura and the police killed in the hospital. And for your friend, because you didn't listen to me when I came to you. The Makato is a death machine. The sooner someone stops it, the less people will die.

PAUL

Even if you kill Kinjo, someone else will take his place.

TAKEDA

No. They worship the occult. Their leader has never lost a battle. If I defeat him, and take his sword, it will be the end of the Makato. Forever.

155 EXT. ISLAND - NIGHT

155

A long, dark motorboat navigates through the waves toward a flickering yellow light on the island. Kinjo stands alone at the helm. Wind blows through his hair. He sees men with torches waiting at the dock. He dons his mask.

156 EXT. DOCKSIDE - NIGHT

156

Sumato and half a dozen students await Kinjo with glowing Japanese lanterns. Everyone is dressed in samurai attire, swords at their sides. Kinjo tosses a rope onto the dock. Takeda's men catch it and tie it down.

SUMATO

You are Kinjo, lord of the Makato?

KINJO

(casually)
Yes, yes.

SUMATO

It is an honor. I shall take you to Takeda.

Sumato bows and leads Kinjo from the dock. The other students follow, except one. He uses his lantern to make sure no one else is on the boat. He then waits on the dock, watching the sea for other vessels.

157 EXT. CASTLE WALLS - NIGHT

157

Sumato leads Kinjo past the huge stone walls of the castle.

158 EXT. CASTLE TOWER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

158

Takeda's students, heavily armed, stand at attention in a circle around the hundred year old stone and wood remains of a burnt tower. Lanterns light the area. Takeda stands alone in the center. Mieko is on the sidelines, short bow in her hand and arrows in a quiver on her shoulders.

Sumato leads Kinjo to the edge of the ring. Kinjo's eyes rapidly survey the surroundings, counting the number of men and their weapons.

159 EXT. DOCKSIDE - NIGHT

159

Takeda's man maintains his vigil of the sea.

Inside Kinjo's boat, a floorboard slides to one side. A NINJA slips out of a compartment under the hull. The ninja produces a fukiya, blowgun. He blows a poison dart into the back of the guard's neck.

The guard reaches back as if bit by some insect. He feels the dart deeply embedded in him, but it is too late, the poison overcomes him.

The lantern falls, and rolls off the dock, floating on the sea. The ninja tosses the guard's limp body after it. A DOZEN OTHER NINJAS climb out of the boat's hull.

160 INT. CELL - NIGHT

160

Paul sits propped against the wall of his cell. He HEARS A SAWING SOUND and looks up.

Ohshima is sawing the bamboo bars off his cell's window. As Paul looks in amazement, Ohshima smiles.

161 EXT. CASTLE TOWER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

161

Kinjo approaches Takeda. Takeda bows. Kinjo does not.

KINJO

Where is Racine?

TAKEDA

I have him.

KINJO

Show him to me.

(CONTINUED)

TAKEDA

No. You must take my word.

KINJO

Very well. I will not fight you.

Kinjo turns and walks away.

TAKEDA

You must. I will not let you leave this ring alive!

KINJO

Then kill me, but I'm not Kinjo.

TAKEDA

What?

KINJO

I am Kinjo's servant, Yato. I am no warrior.

TAKEDA

I do not believe you.

KINJO

Kinjo did not believe you had Racine. He is at the port, awaiting my return. Show me Racine and he will come.

Takeda debates. This is not going as he had planned.

TAKEDA

Wait here.

Takeda walks toward the castle. Over the sound of the wind a wolf can be heard, crying in the distance. It is a signal. Kinjo slowly slips shuriken from his jacket.

With a flash of speed, Kinjo throws shuriken, aiming for the archers. Two are instantly killed. Simultaneously, deadly arrows fly down from the trees, also targeted at the archers. Several are hit and fall.

Mieko is hit in the back by an arrow. The point protrudes out her stomach. As blood fills her mouth she turns and spots the ninja with the bow up in a tree. With her last ounce of energy she raises her bow and fires. She hits him and he falls to the ground. Mieko collapses.

Takeda spins and looks at Kinjo in horror. He realizes that he has been tricked. The ring breaks up into chaos.

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED:

16)

Takeda draws his sword and rushes at Kinjo, but before he can make it, several ninja appear and attack students with a variety of weapons. A ninja leaps out and attacks Takeda. Takeda cuts him down and quickly kills another.

Kinjo likewise draws his sword, and he mercilessly slaughters the students. They draw their weapons to defend themselves, but it is obvious they are outclassed.

162 INT. CELL - NIGHT

162

Ohshima cuts the ropes behind Paul's back and helps him to his feet.

Paul is stiff from his painful stomach wound. Ohshima pushes him toward the window impatiently.

OHSHIMA

Ninja.

He mumbles in Japanese and makes a cutting motion on his neck. Paul gets the idea. He climbs through the window.

163 EXT. CASTLE TOWER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

163

Takeda is the only hope. He kills several ninja with incredibly fast and elegant strokes of his sword. He attacks another who has just killed a student.

But Kinjo is working even quicker, killing students three at a time. Bodies are strewn everywhere. It is a massacre. Kinjo kills another student.

Sumato manages to kill a ninja. Kinjo spots him. The two square off. Sumato attacks Kinjo with a long, graceful cut. Kinjo easily blocks it and rips his blade across Sumato's chest. Another cut slices his throat. Sumato falls to the ground and dies.

Takeda kills two ninja in quick movements, he is the only one skilled enough to take them on. He makes his way across the battlefield, trying to get at Kinjo.

Kinjo moves in on a group of students, cutting them down one by one. Takeda desperately tries to reach them, but he is attacked by two more ninja.

The ninja stab at Takeda from both sides and hold him in check as he watches Kinjo murder the last students.

Silence falls. Left standing are Kinjo, Takeda, and the last two ninja. Dozens of dead lie around them.

(CONTINUED)

TAKEDA

Kinjo!

Kinjo eyes Takeda contemptuously. Takeda tries to move forward, but the two ninja keep him back. Takeda attacks one, but must withdraw to defend his rear from the other.

TAKEDA

Challenge me, Kinjo! Are you afraid?

Kinjo strolls toward Takeda. He sheaths his sword.

TAKEDA

Are you afraid, Kinjo? Are you?

A chigiriki finds its way into Kinjo's hands. The chain flies through the air and wraps around Takeda's blade. Kinjo pulls sharply, and Takeda's sword flies from his hands. He swings it across the field, far out of reach.

The two ninja leap in and press the points of their blades to Takeda's neck. Takeda stands frozen, trapped. Kinjo, pockets his chain and eyes him with an amused look.

KINJO

Idiot samurai.

Takeda is shaking with frustration.

TAKEDA

Coward! Fight me if you dare!

KINJO

I don't fight for honor, idiot samurai. I fight to win. I have won.

TAKEDA

(desperately)

What about Racine? You don't know where he is.

KINJO

Probably hiding somewhere. We will have time to find him.

(to the ninja)

Kill him.

Takeda's arms fly up and sweep the blades from his neck. He grabs one of the ninja's arms, pulls, and breaks it with his knee. He wrenches the sword from the ninja's hand.

The other ninja attacks. Takeda ducks down and slices the ninja across the chest. He finishes him off.

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED:

163

Takeda pivots and cuts the other ninja's throat. He turns triumphantly toward Kinjo. Kinjo draws his sword with a gesture of mild annoyance.

KINJO

Very well, idiot samurai.
You've earned your challenge.

164 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

164

Ohshima leads Paul to a wooden fishing skiff dragged up onto the beach. He takes hold of one of the edges and motions to Paul to grab the other side. Paul hesitates.

OHSHIMA

Ninja!

He makes another neck cutting motion.

PAUL

Takeda?

Ohshima shrugs contemptuously and mumbles in Japanese. He motions for Paul to take the side of the boat.

OHSHIMA

Isoide Kudasai!

Paul grabs hold and they drag it through the sand. Waves crash around them as they float the boat. Ohshima clammers inside and motions for Paul to climb aboard. Paul glances back at the castle.

OHSHIMA

Kinjo!

He slaps Paul on the arm and tries to drag him on board.

PAUL

Mieko? What about Mieko?

Ohshima waves her off. He doesn't think much of her either. Paul stands rigid. The water rocks the boat. Paul shakes his head.

PAUL

I'm tired of running away.

He pushes the boat off into the water. As the boat drifts off, Ohshima looks back at Paul, unbelieving.

Suddenly, inexplicably, Ohshima laughs. He picks up a paddle and starts to row away.

Paul watches it go. He walks back toward the castle.

165 EXT. CASTLE TOWER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

165

Kinjo and Takeda fight. Their swords crash like thunder. Takeda fights the battle he has trained his whole life for. His moves are elegant, strong, well-executed.

Yet, we quickly learn Kinjo has the upper hand. Where Takeda is an artist, Kinjo is a killer. Takeda's moves have little effect on Kinjo. But each time Kinjo attacks he tests his opponent, learning his strengths and his weaknesses. Takeda's eyes show doubt.

166 EXT. CASTLE GROUNDS - NIGHT

166

Paul feels his way through the castle grounds, searching for the battle. He hears swords crashing in the distance.

167 EXT. CASTLE TOWER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

167

Takeda grits his teeth and mounts a strong offensive. But Kinjo stands firm. Takeda pulls back, tired and uncertain. Kinjo rises a little in his stance. His sword relaxes. He has easily held off the best that Takeda can muster.

KINJO

You have lost.

Enraged, Takeda renews his attack on Kinjo.

TAKEDA

NO!

Kinjo easily sidesteps the samurai's moves. Kinjo's sword whips up and slashes Takeda's face.

Takeda screams. Kinjo's blade cuts across Takeda's leg. Takeda moans in pain. Kinjo hacks into Takeda's chest.

Kinjo draws back. Takeda stands, bleeding badly. He holds his sword uncertainly.

KINJO

You have lost.

Kinjo knocks Takeda's sword about as if he were a clown. Bleeding badly and confused, Takeda wearily drops his sword to the ground. He is beaten. He falls to his knees.

Across the field, Mieko lies in the dirt. Her eyelids flutter open. She sees the massacre around her. She spots Takeda and Kinjo in the distance.

Kinjo casually approaches Takeda. He forces his head down with the tip of his foot. With a clean slice he cuts it off. Takeda's body crumples to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

167 CONTINUED:

167

Mieko winces. She struggles to move, but the arrow is too painful. She grabs its shaft and tries to pull it out.

In the distance, Kinjo stands, tired. He removes his mask, and wipes the sweat off his brow. He hears the sound of a woman gasping in pain. Mieko has pulled the arrow from her body. Kinjo spots her across the field, tired.

KINJO

How much blood must I bath in to get clean?

Kinjo slowly starts for her, sword swinging at side. Mieko, legs too weak to stand, desperately grabs her bow. She pulls an arrow and finds the strength to take aim.

She fires. It sails straight for its target. Kinjo catches it in mid air, inches from his body.

Mieko drops her bow hopelessly. She spots a sword on the ground nearby. It's the sword Ohshima made for Takeda. She tries to crawl toward it. But it's too far.

Her head drops wearily. It's over. She looks back at Kinjo, frozen in his tracks. Eyes fixed behind her.

Clouds pass across the moon. Mieko looks over her shoulder and sees.. Paul. He is standing behind her, near the sword.

Kinjo and Paul stare in a suspended moment of déjà vu. Both of their lives have been intertwined since they met. Both knowing they could never be free until they met again.

168 INT. BEDROOM / DREAM

168

Paul sees Kinjo's face turn toward him in Kirina's bedroom. Kinjo spins and kills Kirina.

The room darkens and fills with water. Kirina rises up out of the water, her body glowing with light. She holds forth a shining sword.

169 EXT. CASTLE TOWER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

169

As if still in the dream, Paul sees a sword on the ground and reaches down to take it. He carries it toward Mieko.

Clouds are gathering over head. Scattered drops of rain fall. Paul drops to one knee and touches Mieko gently.

MIEKO

Run. Run.

PAUL

I can't leave you.

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

169

Paul's grip tightens on the sword.

MIEKO

Give me the sword and I'll stall him long enough for you to get away. If Takeda failed, no one can beat him.

PAUL

Who knows? Even monkeys fall out of trees.

Paul rises up and starts for Kinjo, sword in hand.

Kinjo eyes Paul curiously. Is it really possible this fool will walk right up to be killed?. Kinjo's sword rises into position. But waits for Paul to move first.

Paul brings his sword up into the underhand position Ohshima taught him and strides toward the amazed Kinjo.

Suddenly, Paul attacks. Kinjo blocks and returns but Paul blocks it back. There is a brief exchange of steel. Paul is awkward, but his unusual moves are unpredictable and threatening. His spirit is strong. Kinjo is forced back.

Kinjo takes a couple steps back, genuinely impressed. Paul pauses, surprised himself.

Suddenly, Kinjo laughs at the absurdity of this man's courage. He bows. Paul, relieved of the moment's tension, laughs too.

PAUL

Not bad, eh? Never seen anything like it, huh?

Kinjo continues to smile. Suddenly, his sword flips around into the same underhand position as Paul's.

Paul stops laughing. His face falls.

PAUL

Oh, I guess you have seen it..

Kinjo attacks for real this time, mimicking Paul's sword style but with much more polish. Paul desperately blocks. Kinjo picks up the pace. Paul clumsily defends himself.

Kinjo attacks stronger, quicker. Paul backs away quickly as he stumblingly blocks each move.

Suddenly, Kinjo's blade slips through and slices Paul's left arm. Paul falls back, holding his sword in his right hand, blood rushing from the injured arm.

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

169

Kinjo relaxes. Rain has begun to sprinkle around them.

KINJO

Amateur.

Paul backs away, raising his sword for Kinjo's next attack. He doesn't stand a chance, but he'll go down fighting.

Kinjo is already bored with the fight. His left hand slips into his pocket. He pulls forth his chigiriki.

Before Paul can move, Kinjo hurls the chain out and lets it fly. The chain spins through the air and wraps across Paul's sword and neck. As the chain tangles around him, Paul's sword is pinned to his body, the blade resting against his face.

Paul struggles to free himself, but he is too entwined. Rain trickles down his hair.

Kinjo strides toward Paul and raises his sword high. His powerful muscles tense for a final blow.

KINJO

I'm sorry. I must finish it.

170 EXT. DREAM

170

Kirina stands before Kinjo, eyes burning.

171 EXT. CASTLE TOWER WRECKAGE - NIGHT

171

Kinjo flinches from the invisible ghost.

In the precious second of confusion, Paul jerks down and pulls the sword blade through the chain, slicing into his cheek at the same time. The sword comes free.

Kinjo sees Paul and attacks, blade ripping downward, Paul dodges and dives into Kinjo, thrusting his sword through Kinjo's body.

The blade pierces Kinjo's right shoulder. There is a frozen moment as Kinjo's eyes widen in pain and shock. His right arm falls limp and his sword drops.

For a moment, Paul thinks the fight is over, but suddenly Kinjo kicks him hard. Paul falls back, drawing his sword out. The rain is falling hard now. Kinjo switches hands.

PAUL

Wait a second. Takeda said there weren't any left handed swordsmen.

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED:

171

Kinjo slices the blade through the air a couple times testing his strength and form. Yep, he can do it.

PAUL

Yeah, well, I guess he's been wrong at least once before.

Kinjo attacks. Paul dodges and blocks. Kinjo attacks again. His weak left arm tries to chip away at Paul's clumsy defenses.

The wound has badly crippled Kinjo, but hatred and courage do not allow him to give up. Kinjo's sword smashes down hard against Paul's blade.

Paul's sword slashes across Kinjo's arm. Kinjo falls back.

Paul attacks and Kinjo blocks it. Their swords press tightly against each other. Kinjo throws Paul off. His sword spins out at Paul. Paul knocks it away.

Kinjo's moves still have all the skill, but his wound and the rain and mud are slowing him.

Paul's sword rips into Kinjo's chest. Kinjo's blade slices across Paul's stomach. They both back off.

The two men rest for a moment. They are both weak and soaked with blood.

Kinjo grits his teeth. He will not lose. He raises his sword. A horrifying cry comes from his lips and he rushes at Paul, his sword ripping through the wind.

Paul blocks the attack with unseen reserves of strength. The two swords crash together and there is a ring of steel louder than a gunshot. Kinjo's sword has snapped in two.

With the instant reflexes of a trained killer, Kinjo drops the sword, pulls a shiriken from his jacket and flings it at Paul with the precise skill of someone who cannot miss.

But he does. Tired, bleeding, Kinjo crumbles to his knees. Either Paul is a ghost or Kinjo is hopelessly jinxed. Either way he's lost.

Paul raises his sword and steps in for the final blow.

KINJO

Kirina...

Paul pauses at the name. Rain pours around them like a flood. Kinjo looks up and speaks in soft Japanese.

KINJO

Finish it...

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED: -

171

Paul's sword drops to his side and he staggers backwards in the mud. Kinjo grabs his half a sword and tries to get to his feet but he is too weak.

KINJO

FINISH IT!

Paul knows what he wants, but he shakes his head.

PAUL

No. Kill your own demons.

Paul backs away slowly and then turns and walks off. He makes it across the field to Mieko. She has watched the fight in stunned silence.

MIEKO

You beat him... you beat Kinjo..

PAUL

He beat himself.

Paul helps her up.

PAUL

I'll make you a deal. You can lean on me if I can lean on you.

Mieko nods. Paul wraps an arm around her and they stagger off toward the castle.

Kinjo watches them go, his face confused and tortured. He manages to pull himself to his feet and calls out.

KINJO

Racine! Racine!

But Paul and Mieko ignore him, disappearing into the rain. Kinjo's head drops. Water trickles around his face. He drops the broken sword into the mud. It's over.

172 EXT. CASTLE

172

Mieko lays her head wearily against Paul's chest as they limp up the steps. Paul gazes down at her beautiful face. She looks up as if to say something, but she is silent.

Paul kisses her gently.

PAUL

We're free.

FADE OUT.